

EXCLUSIVE READERS' Q&A JOHNNY HERBERT AND BILLY MONGER

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MOTORSPORT NEWS

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Podcast pals tackle the Motorsport News posers, p16



RED FLAG TO A BULL...

Max Verstappen took his second victory of the F1 season in a three-times interrupted Australian Grand Prix at Albert Park in Melbourne on Sunday. The Red Bull man led home a rejuvenated Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes), while Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso claimed his third podium of the 2023 campaign



Young Scot follows famous grandfather Jimmy by driving an Opel in the European championship

McRAE JR GETS PROVEN WINNER FOR JUNIOR ERC BID



Aim: Max McRae

By Matt James

Max McRae believes he has the car and team capable of carrying him to Junior ERC glory in 2023.

Colin McRae's nephew has signed to drive an Opel Corsa Rally4 for The Racing Factory, a move that will revive fond memories for the Scottish family.

Max McRae's grandfather Jimmy drove Opels over a five-year stretch in the European Rally Championship, a fact not

lost on the 18-year-old. "He had a lot of success and almost won the European title with Opel [in 1982], so it's really nice to be back with a brand that was so big for him," Max McRae said.

"The car looks sick and it's got some real speed. Rally4 is super-close but the Corsa is the way forward and The Racing Factory is the team to deliver the car to help us deliver the results."

Laurent Pellier won the 2022 Junior ERC title driving a Corsa.

Full story, p9

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**MOTORSPORT
NEWS**

PREVIEW

**LET'S GET
READY TO
RUMBLE...!**

**We look ahead to
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REPORT

**CIRCUIT
CHAMPS
SLUG IT OUT**

**Kelly on top on return
to Cadwell Park, p26**



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COMMENT

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Let's go round again: the grand prix grid takes its third start at Albert Park on Sunday

F1'S RULEBOOK NEEDS A RETHINK

It is always interesting to watch a grand prix with a casual viewer, as I did with the race from Albert Park during the early hours of Sunday morning. I was explaining things as the race unfolded but was completely confounded by what was happening following the final red flag.

In the delay while the race directors fathomed out what to do about the restart, my fellow viewer had already turned on his tablet and was watching highlights from the previous day's Premier League matches. The impetus behind the race, and much of the interest, had ebbed away.

Would it restart? Wouldn't it? What would the order be? In the end, we were treated to a one-lap farce of the F1 machines touring around the safety car before crossing the line lamely. What, exactly, was the point of that? It took away the crescendo to the race and meant that the post-race celebrations were merely a case of going through the motions. It was a highly unsatisfactory end and surely the regulations will have to be tweaked as a result of this fiasco.

In this issue, we also look ahead to the upcoming British GT Championship, which blasts into life at Oulton Park this weekend. With the healthiest entry in the headline class for almost a decade, the fights for glory should be superb. It is almost impossible to select a pre-season favourite, but we have the lowdown on the pairings that are likely to shine in both the GT3 and GT4 divisions, starting on page 14.

In this issue, our exclusive readers' question-and-answer session is with two men who've shown incredible resilience in their respective motor racing careers. Johnny Herbert's star was seriously derailed by an enormous accident at Brands Hatch in August 1988, while British Formula 4 racer Billy Monger suffered life-changing injuries at Donington Park in 2017. Both have come together to create a new Formula 1-based podcast to give listeners the inside track to grand prix racing. Both have spent time in the grand prix paddock as pundits, and both aren't afraid to give their opinions. As you can read in Graham Keilloh's interview, which begins on page 16, they aren't afraid to rib each other too. Their gentle easy style will surely make their new venture a success.

We have all the action from the national motorsport scene last weekend, including a report from the latest round of the Motorsport News-supported Circuit Rally Championship at Cadwell Park, the Alan Healy Memorial Rally.

Matt James

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Circuit Rally
battlers take
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FORMULA 1 REPORT: AUSTRALIAN GP

Photos: Motorsport Images, Red Bull Content Pool



Max survived early skirmishes



Golden period: Verstappen took his second win of the grand prix year

MAX SUPREME AGAIN AS F1 HIT BY PARK STRIFE

Red Bull man to the fore as chaos breaks out in his wheeltracks. By **James Roberts**



Hamilton was thrilled with his second-placed finish

F1 RESULTS

Australian Grand Prix

Laps: 58 Distance: 190.216 miles Track: Albert Park

	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Max Verstappen	Red Bull-Honda	2h32m28.371s
2	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes	+0.179s
3	Fernando Alonso	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+0.769s
4	Lance Stroll	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+3.082s
5	Sergio Perez	Red Bull-Honda	+3.320s
6	Lando Norris	McLaren-Mercedes	+3.701s
7	Nico Hulkenberg	Haas-Ferrari	+4.939s
8	Oscar Piastri	McLaren-Mercedes	+5.382s
9	Guanyu Zhou	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	+5.713s
10	Yuki Tsunoda	AlphaTauri-Honda	+6.052s

11 Valtteri Bottas (Alfa Romeo-Ferrari) +6.513s; 12 Carlos Sainz (Ferrari) +6.594s*; 13 Pierre Gasly (Alpine-Renault) 56 laps/accident; 14 Esteban Ocon (Alpine-Renault) 56 laps/accident; 15 Nick de Vries (AlphaTauri-Honda) 56 laps/accident; 16 Logan Sargeant (Williams-Mercedes) 56 laps/accident; 17 Kevin Magnussen (Haas-Ferrari) 52 laps/accident; 18 George Russell (Mercedes) 17 laps/engine; 19 Alexander Albon (Williams-Mercedes) 6 laps/accident; 20 Charles Leclerc 0 laps/accident. * = five-second penalty for causing a collision. Drivers' championship (after 3/23 rounds): 1 Verstappen 69; 2 Perez 54; 3 Alonso 45; 4 Hamilton 38; 5 Sainz 20; 6 Stroll 20. Constructors' championship: 1 Red Bull 123; 2 Aston Martin 65; 3 Mercedes 56; 4 Ferrari 26; 5 McLaren 12; 6 Alpine 8.

It took three corners to decide the result of a chaotic Australian Grand Prix. In just those few hundred metres, the fortunes of half the grid were turned upside down. Perhaps the most remarkable roller coaster was the fate of the Aston Martins. Exiting Turn 3 on the 57th of 58 laps, Fernando Alonso was in 11th, while Lance Stroll was bogged down in the Turn 3 gravel trap in 12th. They were the last two cars in the field still running. But in the final classification, Alonso was celebrating his third podium of the year, with Stroll a place behind in fourth. To go from zero points to 27 in a single lap typified the hectic climax to the race at Albert Park last Sunday.

Perhaps the biggest irony is that Red Bull's Max Verstappen won from Lewis Hamilton's Mercedes behind the safety car, despite the intention to avoid such a scenario in the first place. But how did the race get to this messy conclusion? Off the original start George Russell (Mercedes) enjoyed a better getaway to beat Verstappen into Turn 1, while his team-mate Hamilton bravely squeezed past the Red Bull into T3. Carlos Sainz got his Ferrari ahead of Alonso, while Charles Leclerc tripped over the other Aston of Stroll and was beached in the gravel. Cue the safety car. Racing resumed on lap four, but within three laps was halted again when Alex Albon – running an impressive sixth in his Williams – spun into the wall at Turn 6. Russell and Sainz pitted, but their strategic thinking was irrelevant when the red flag appeared to allow the clear-up of the gravel Albon had deposited all over the track. With the majority of the field now on hard tyres for the duration of the race, Hamilton led from Verstappen and Alonso at the restart. Russell passed Pierre Gasly's Alpine for fourth, then came to a fiery halt with a rare engine failure in the back of his Mercedes. Behind the leaders there was plenty of action, particularly with the Red Bull of Sergio Perez charging through the field after



Alonso benefited from the late-race confusion to return to third spot

starting from the pitlane. His qualifying had been marred with a braking issue which caused him to crash out of Q1. With 15 laps to go Perez overtook the McLaren of Lando Norris for eighth around the outside of the ultra-quick Turn 9 and 10 sequence. After a poor qualifying, this was a spirited performance from the British driver who spent a number of laps trying to overtake the Haas of Nico Hulkenberg. He finally forced the German into a mistake at Turn 11 which gave Norris the inside into Turn 12. Finishing sixth at the flag, he summed up his afternoon perfectly. "I stayed out of trouble and away from damage," said Norris. "Half the job seemed to be avoiding people who are a bit out of control, making a lot of mistakes and crashing into people." On lap 48 it was the turn of the leader to make a mistake, as Verstappen ran wide entering the penultimate corner. His lead over Hamilton was cut from 11 to 7.6 seconds following his grassy excursion. Another driver to make an error was the other Haas of Kevin Magnussen. Running wide out of Turn 2 (on lap 54) he hit the wall and with his right-rear tyre lying forlornly on the track, the safety car was deployed once more. With the clear-up taking a while and laps running out, the decision from Race Control was to fly another red flag. After taking criticism for not taking this

course of action at last year's Italian Grand Prix, it gave the fans an exciting two-lap grandstand finish. But at the third standing start, all hell broke loose. At the back Williams man Logan Sargeant ran into Nick de Vries' AlphaTauri eliminating them both into Turn 1. Up front, Gasly locked-up forcing Perez wide. Sainz ran deep into the corner and spun Alonso around. In a desperation to gain places, Esteban Ocon saw a gap past his team-mate, but the two Alpines made contact and clattered into the wall. Heading to Turn 3, Verstappen led Hamilton while Stroll outbraked himself, ran wide, and fell to the tail of the field. Sainz was running third ahead of Hulkenberg when the red flag appeared once more. As the field had not reached the first sector of the lap the order was taken back to the final starting grid line-up. That meant a reprieve for Aston Martin, disappointment for Alpine and a protest (eventually thrown out) from Haas. Finally, Sainz was awarded a five second penalty for hitting Alonso and dropped out of the points as – after another delay – the safety car took the remaining runners around for the final lap. Probably smiling to himself amid the chaos, was someone who hadn't been seen in an F1 paddock since the 2021 Abu Dhabi fiasco. Former FIA race director Michael Masi...



Russell's victory hopes went up in a blaze of non-glory...

RACING NEWS

QUESTIONS REMAIN AFTER CHAOTIC LATE-RACE RESTART AT AUSTRALIAN GRAND PRIX

Post-race protests and unhappy grand prix drivers after a farce at Albert Park

By Matt James

Mercedes star George Russell has brought into question some of the decisions made by officials at last weekend's Australian Grand Prix, which was red flagged on three occasions after separate incidents and finished under a caution period.

The first halt was brought about when Alex Albon crashed his Williams on lap six, abandoning his damaged machine at the side of the track, which was littered with gravel. The race was further suspended when Kevin Magnussen smote the wall at Turn 2 in his Haas and left debris on the course. The final stoppage came after a crash-strewn restart with only two racing laps scheduled to remain.

The race was concluded by the drivers circulating behind the safety car to go to the finish line under yellow-flag conditions to meet the mandated 58-lap grand prix length.

Russell had led the race early on in his Mercedes and pitted when the first safety car came out but before the red flag was called for, which meant he lost his advantage and he later retired with engine issues.

Grand Prix Drivers' Association director Russell slammed the decision for the initial stoppage. The Briton said: "I thought the

red flag was totally unnecessary. There was obviously quite a bit of gravel on the track, but there was a clear racing line. We've seen it far worse in the past.

"We're all trying to work together with the FIA to improve things, but it's seemingly a bit of a challenge."

His countryman, McLaren driver Lando Norris, scored his first points of the campaign with a sixth-place finish but he also questioned the second stoppage, which he said he felt was unnecessary and caused the chaos in the scheduled final two-lap dash to the flag.

He said: "The whole point of red flagging it [after Magnussen's spill], it feels like was just to put on a show. I'm the one driving the car so I just feel like I could have been so unlucky through no reason. I easily could have crashed with [Nico] Hulkenberg at the end because there's people going off and you're suddenly swerving and things like that.

"Because they try and put on a show, you just get unlucky and everything can get taken away from you all of a sudden."

Hulkenberg had been on course to finish in fourth until the positions were reset before the run to the flag. His Haas team protested the process that had been followed by the race director. It was subsequently dismissed.



Australian GP was blighted



Tandy will be lack to La Sarthe

TANDY JOINS PORSCHE'S LE MANS 2023 LINE-UP

Former winner Nick Tandy has joined the Porsche driver roster for this season's Le Mans 24 Hours as part of a three-car works line-up.

The Briton, who claimed overall glory in a Porsche 919 Hybrid in 2015 alongside Earl Bamber and Nico Hulkenberg, is contesting the IMSA series in the US this year as a Porsche racer, but will return to La Sarthe in the 963 alongside Mathieu Jaminet and Felipe Nasr.

Tandy told Autosport: "It wasn't sure at the beginning when that would be possible [to do Le Mans], but it's great that it's happening in the first year of the programme and that I'm delighted to be part of it. The last time we went to Le Mans with a third entry, it didn't end too badly, did it?"

The two regular World Endurance Championship Penske Porsche Motorsport entries will be driven by Dane Cameron, Michael Christensen and Frederic Makowiecki alongside the crew of Andre Lotterer, Laurens Vanthoor and Kevin Estre.

IWASA HOLDS HIS NERVE TO COLLECT F2 HONOURS

Red Bull protege Ayumu Iwasa became Formula 2's first double winner of the season when Formula 2 held its maiden races in Australia last weekend.

Japanese Iwasa planted his DAMS-run machine on pole position and pitted earlier than race leader Frederik Vesti to claim the victory in the bruising race after making his way through the leading pack. Prema's

Vesti was thwarted when he stopped later under a safety car, which handed second place to Theo Pourchaire (ART), who had a competitive race, and Arthur Leclerc (DAMS). Briton Oliver Bearman was delayed by contact during the pitstop cycle.

Dennis Hauger won the sprint race on Saturday with a classy lights-to-flag victory in his MP Motorsport machine.

The Norwegian powered away from pole on the damp-but-drying track as several others fell foul of the slippery track. Jak Crawford (Hitech) and Kush Maini (Campos) completed the podium. Bearman took seventh place for Prema.

Iwasa now leads the standings by eight points from Pourchaire. The next rounds are at Baku, Azerbaijan, on April 29-30.



Iwasa is now the F2 points leader



Team members will no longer be left climbing the walls for wins

FIA WARNS AGAINST PITWALL CELEBRATIONS IN FUTURE

Grand prix racing's governing body the FIA has threatened F1 teams with penalties if they let crew members climb the pitwall safety fence at the end of each race to welcome home successful cars.

Although the practice has been against the current regulations, it has previously been overlooked. However, a directive from race

boss Niels Wittach has reiterated the rule and informed teams that any which fail to follow the regulations will be reported to the stewards for further action.

It is thought any breach of the regulations would result in a financial penalty for the team. This rule will now be reinforced across all FIA events in all categories.

BRITON O'SULLIVAN OPENS HIS F3 ACCOUNT WITH VICTORY

Zak O'Sullivan inherited his maiden Formula 3 victory in Melbourne last weekend in the sprint event after all three MP Motorsport entries were kicked out post-race for non-conforming bodywork.

Franco Colapinto had led home in a chaotic race which was interrupted four times by the safety car. But, during the checks in parc ferme after the race, the Argentine racer and team-mates Mari Boya and Jonny Edgar were excluded.

That promoted O'Sullivan to victory, while the other podium positions were taken by Sebastian Montoya (Hitech) and O'Sullivan's Prema team-mate Paul Aron.

Points leader Gabriele Bortoletto took a high-pressure win in the feature race in his Trident machine. The Brazilian fended off his race-long shadow Gregoire Saucy (ART), while Hitech's Gabriele Mini was third. O'Sullivan was fifth, Luke Browning (Hitech) eighth and Edgar 11th.



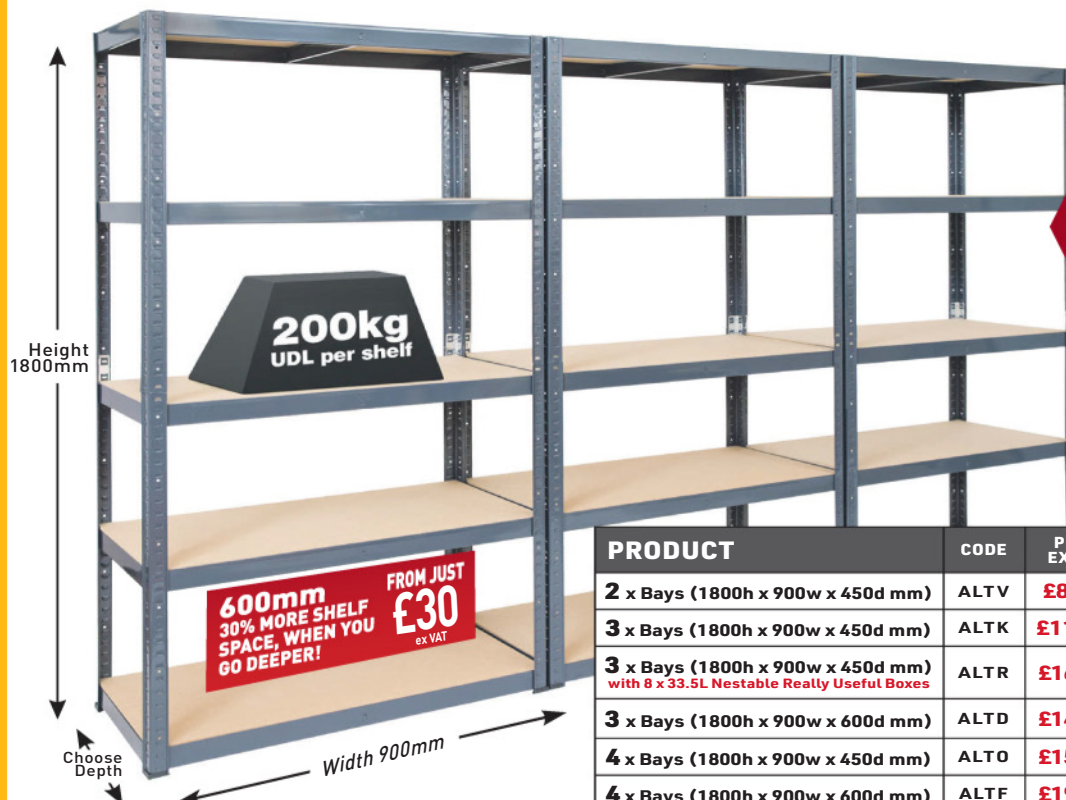
O'Sullivan collected the winners' trophy in the Formula 3 sprint race

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RACING NEWS

HAWKEY GETS LAST BRITISH GT DRIVE

Former DTM and W Series racer Esme Hawkey will make her British GT debut this year sharing a Toro Verde Ginetta G56 GT4 with Joe Wheeler. Hawkey with the move has completed British GT's full-season line-up, for the 2023 campaign that kicks off this weekend at Oulton Park. The 2020 Porsche Carrera Cup GB Pro-Am champion Hawkey has since raced a Lamborghini Huracan GT3 in DTM, with a full season in 2021 and racing in two meetings in 2022. She now joins Wheeler in a Silver Cup pairing aboard one of series debutant Toro Verde's two G56s. Hawkey said: "I'm really excited to represent Ginetta as their female brand ambassador for 2023. I tested the car for the first time [last] week at Oulton Park with Toro Verde and feel we have a strong car and I'm extremely excited to get back racing and fighting for podiums."



Hawkey: GT berth



Keen (l) is set to partner Loggie



Ramped up 2 Seas line-up

Photos: Motorsport Images, Jakob Ebrey

KEEN TO BE 2 SEAS BRITISH GT SUPERSUB

Legend to step in for three races during 2023 replacing Gounon and Adam

By Graham Keilloh

British GT legend Phil Keen will return to the championship in three rounds this season in 2 Seas Mercedes GT3s replacing Jules Gounon and Jonny Adam who have date clashes.

British GT's record race-winner Keen will stand in

for Adam racing alongside James Cottingham at the Silverstone 500 in May and at October's Donington Park season closer, when Adam competes in European Le Mans Series. Keen also will partner reigning champion Ian Loggie in July's Portimao round when Gounon is competing in IMSA. Keen also in Gounon's absence

shared Loggie's 2 Seas Mercedes at British GT's official media day pre-season test last month. Keen has not raced in British GT since mid-2022 when his driving partner Michael Igoe and his WPI Lamborghini outfit withdrew from the championship. Igoe has since turned his hand to rally driving in the MN-supported Circuit Rally Championship.

Keen has also sampled a GT4 Mercedes when winning last season's Portimao 24 Hours, again alongside Loggie, when finishing second in the Six Hours of Abu Dhabi, and in last year's GT Cup. Keen said: "I am really looking forward to working with 2 Seas Motorsport – they are a great team, they have made me

feel very welcome already, and I feel like I've been there a season already. "I am looking forward to racing with Ian and James, who have proven themselves to be two of the best on the grid, and I think both are strong title contenders for this season. I'm looking forward to working with everyone to keep the championship momentum."



O'Brien will handle the GT4 McLaren

O'BRIEN TO DO GT CUP ROUNDS

GT Cup champion Michael O'Brien will compete in selected championship rounds this year still with Orange Racing by JMH but in a GT4 McLaren with racing rookie Melly Zhang. O'Brien took last year's overall crown in an Orange Racing McLaren 720S GT3 alongside Simon Orange, and in 2023 O'Brien – as well as completing a full British GT season alongside Orange – will make GT Cup appearances in a McLaren 570S GT4 with Zhang ahead of a planned full campaign in 2024. O'Brien is also Zhang's mentor, advisor and coach. The pair's GT Cup programme is set to

start with the Brands Hatch meeting at the end of this month. Then, amid date clashes with the McLaren Trophy that O'Brien also competes in this year, their next outings are likely to be at one or both of the season's final two meetings, at Donington Park in September and Snetterton in October. Zhang said: "It is a dream come true that I could become part of the racing world and I am deeply honoured to start my race journey with GT Cup in 2023. [O'Brien has] always believed in me." O'Brien added: "I'm delighted to take on a new challenge. [Zhang is] developing well and picking everything up very quickly."

STELLER MAKES LE MANS CUP MOVE

Reigning British GT double GT4 champion Steller Motorsport has switched to international competition for 2023 with Sennan Fielding and James Wood sharing a GT3 Audi in Le Mans Cup. Fielding and Richard Williams took British GT4's drivers' crown last year with Steller, which also took the teams' title. Now Fielding steps to Steller's GT3 machine – which they raced in three British GT rounds in 2020 – in a Pro-Am pairing with Wood. Williams moves to a team manager role. The Automobile Club de l'Ouest-sanctioned Le Mans Cup's six-round season begins at Barcelona this month and includes a round at the Le Mans 24-Hour meeting. This programme is the first time

the Steller team has raced in European-wide competition, and the effort will also support Sir Jackie Stewart's Race Against Dementia charity. Steller technical director Max Daymond told Motorsport News: "We always planned to make that break into international competition. This opportunity was something we wanted to pursue and especially with the general outlook for GT3 racing in Europe changing over the next year or two, now is the perfect time to get into the ACO ladder and see how we compare." Fielding added to MN: "Over in Europe's the horizon's huge. Who knows where we could be in three to five years' time? If we're not aiming to win there's no point going."



Sennan Fielding (left) and James Wood will tackle the '23 Le Mans Cup



HOTCHIN IN THE PINK

GB4's first-ever privateer entrant Dylan Hotchin unveiled a distinctive pink-themed paint job on his single-seater machine, plus a Pac-Man design on the rear wing, when running the car for the first time at Donington Park recently. Hotchin told MN: "Pink's not a very used colour in racing, so we were like we'll use it and absolutely hammer it. We get sponsored by Arcade Warehouse, they do all the arcade machines. They wanted Pac-Man on the back so we were like we can deliver that!"

RACING NEWS

Photos: Graham Holbon, Jakob Ebrey

TARQUINI CHECKS OUT UK TALENT

Tin-top legend Gabriele Tarquini attended TCR UK's media day pre-season test at Donington Park last week supporting newly appointed Hyundai junior drivers Alex Ley and Bradley Kent.

The 1994 British Touring Car champion added that he plans to attend a TCR UK race weekend this season.

He told Motorsport News: "Our target is to let them grow up as professional drivers, so the plan is to do more test sessions in Europe, speaking about technique, driving, set-up."

"We already did a test in Misano last week. Lewis was not able to join us but Alex did a very good job. Really impressed about his driving: no mistakes; improving every lap."

"It's [TCR UK] great. Now the grid is very good. Hyundai, we follow very very close the TCR regional, national [championships] and all around the world. In Europe now we have two very good championships: one is the UK the other is Italy."



Tarquini is a TCR UK fan



Ben Higgins will race dad...

RALLY CHAMP HIGGINS TO CONTEST LEGENDS

Father-versus-son battle tempts in three-time champion to Cadwell opener

By Graham Keillor

Three-time British Rally champion Mark Higgins will race in Legends Cars' Cadwell Park season opener this month and might make further appearances during 2023.

Manx-born Higgins – who is also 2018's British Rallycross champion and a Hollywood stunt driver – is father of 2022's Legends rookie champion Ben, and Higgins Sr was tempted to the April 15-16 Legends double-header by the prospect of an intra-family battle.

He'll race a car he prepared himself.

Higgins Sr said: "I wanted to have a play in Legends and this opportunity came up, and it's a great chance to race with my son Ben – I hope he beats me! I'm only doing Cadwell Park for now as the date fits with my commitments work-wise, we'll see what happens later in the year."

"Cadwell is more like a rally stage than a track, so I'm looking forward to it. I did do a couple of Legends races years ago but it's been a long time, so I've no idea how quick we'll be."

Two-time Legends champion Chris Grieve has also confirmed his return to the contest this year – after 15 years away in motorbike racing – in Legends' British Touring Car Championship-supporting Elite Cup.

Grieve said: "If I can finish in the top five in the Elite Cup I'd be over the moon, but everything has moved on since I won the championship, so I need to get adjusted to that. The biggest change back from the bikes I've been racing will be the braking, how you apply the brakes."



Higgins Sr will tackle Cadwell Park

GT ACE MITCHELL SEEKS TCR UK DRIVE

British GT champion Jack Mitchell is seeking a TCR UK race deal for 2023 after sampling a Jamsport-run Hyundai at last week's Donington Park official media day pre-season test.

The 2018 British GT4 champion finished third in last season's Mini Challenge JCW standings, and in 2021 did several British Touring Car Championship rounds in a Team Hard Cupra Leon. TCR UK's campaign starts this weekend at Snetterton.

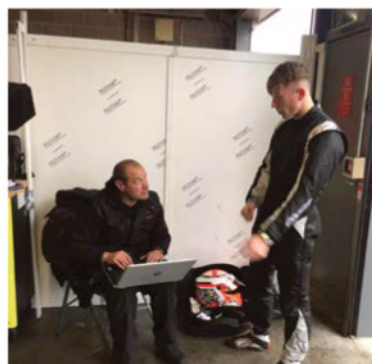
Mitchell told Motorsport News: "It's the first time I've driven it. It's

one of the options for this year.

"Obviously it's cutting it a bit fine but we're trying it out, and seeing if we can get something together."

"I've had a few friends who have been racing in the championship for quite a few years and this year you can see the push behind the scenes to get it more televised and get bigger numbers on the grid and it seems like a good place to be."

"If we do end up doing it, it will be a full season. If this doesn't work out it'll probably be on the sidelines for me [in 2023]."



Mitchell has TCR UK ambitions

BRSCC STRIKES DECAL DEAL FOR CLUB SERIES

The British Racing and Sports Car Club has struck a decal supply agreement for 2023 with motorsport equipment manufacturer AMR Motorsport for a number of the club's categories.

AMR was formed by Martin Piccolo and TCR UK race-winner Adam Shepherd and designs and manufactures a range of the latest race car set-up equipment, such as wireless corner weight scales, plus provides pit equipment, stickers and other accessories. Via the deal AMR becomes the designated decal supplier for a wide variety of BRSCC series and AMR logos

will be present on competing cars.

Piccolo said: "After many years working and racing with the BRSCC, it's a real pleasure that myself and Adam have agreed [the] deal. We've both seen the club and its many popular championships and series go from strength to strength, especially over the past few seasons."

BRSCC's event operations manager Charlotte White added: "In the past the supply of the numerous championship and series decals has been a fragmented process, to have the majority now supplied through a single source means less time wasted."



AMR will link up with BRSCC series



Smiley's new Honda racer

SMILEY'S LATEST LATE CAR DASH

Reigning TCR UK champion Chris Smiley had another frantic last-minute dash to pick his car up for the latest season, this time to Spa. Twelve months ago Smiley's dad Charlie did a 2500-mile round trip to pick up their race car in the days before Oulton Park's curtain raiser, for the then-new Restart Racing team. They then won Oulton's first race.

Smiley with Restart at this weekend's Snetterton opener

becomes the first in the world to compete with the brand-new Honda Civic Type R TCR.

Smiley told Motorsport News at last week's Donington Park official test: "We're going to leave tonight, make our way over to Belgium, then we're to get a test in it tomorrow. We'll get it home with us. It'll get all the graphics put on at the weekend. Then we'll be trying to get a few laps in it. It's a bit tight on time, but that's the way it is."

RALLY NEWS

McRAE TO FOLLOW GRANDFATHER JIMMY WITH EUROPEAN OPEL DRIVE

Eighteen-year-old joins The Racing Factory from Portugal to pilot Corsa in Junior ERC

By Matt James

Max McRae will be Opel-powered when he goes for European championship title glory this season – just like his grandfather Jimmy was more than 40 years ago.

McRae Sr was driving an Opel Ascona 400 when he took four wins on his way to the runner-up spot in the 1982 ERC standings behind Tony Fassina.

His 18-year-old grandson Max will embark on his first Junior ERC campaign in an Opel Corsa Rally4 run by The Racing Factory, an established outfit based in Portugal.

“Gramps is pretty synonymous with the Opel Ascona 400,” said Max McRae, son of Alister and the nephew of the late Colin. “He had a lot of success and almost won the European title with Opel [in 1982], so it’s really nice to be back with a brand that was so big for him.”

With Laurent Pellier taking the 2022 Junior ERC title in a Corsa Rally4, McRae has picked a car with title-winning pedigree for his first championship campaign outside Australia, where he grew up.

“I’ve heard plenty about the Opel,” said McRae, who will return to live in the McRae family’s hometown of Lanark in Scotland, the country of his birth.

“The car looks sick and it’s got some real speed. Rally4 is super-close, we know that, but we believe the Corsa is the way forward and The Racing Factory is the team to deliver the car to help us deliver the results.”

Owned by wealthy businessman and gentleman rally driver Aloisio Monteiro, Porto-based The Racing Factory guided Armindo Araujo to the Portuguese



Max McRae has put pen to paper

championship crown in 2020 and 2022. The team is also overseeing Mikko Heikkila’s overall ERC attack in 2023 with the Finn challenging for victory on the season opener in Fafe last month before he stopped to change a puncture on the final stage.

“It’s with added pride and responsibility that we have Max with us this year,” Monteiro said. “We are aware the McRae name carries with it a lot of euphoria, but we cannot lose the focus which is to continue to be competitive and reliable in order to achieve the results we have in mind in 2023. I would like to thank the McRae family for the confidence in our structure and hope that this partnership lasts for many years.”

McRae will start his Junior ERC campaign on Rally Poland, a high-speed all-gravel event from May 19-21.

“That’s going to be a baptism of fire,” said McRae. “I land from Australia and [go] straight into one of Europe’s fastest gravel rallies. And when you look at the second round in Latvia [you] understand what fast roads are really about. It’s going to be insane and I just want to get started.”



McRae will handle a Corsa Rally4 machine



Grandad Jimmy drove an Opel Ascona in 1982



Sebastien Loeb’s last WRC outing was in Greece during 2022

LOEB: NO IMMEDIATE PLANS FOR WRC RETURN

Sebastien Loeb is unlikely to make a return to the World Rally Championship any time soon, having been linked to an ad hoc campaign earlier this year.

The nine-time WRC champion, 49, was speaking following his debut Azores Rallye victory last weekend, which came on the back of the Frenchman claiming six stage wins out of a possible 12 aboard a Toksport WRT-run Skoda Fabia RS Rally2.

He’d been invited – and paid – to drive on the famous island rally by the organiser as part of efforts to revive the event’s fortunes after it was dropped from the European and

Portuguese championship schedules.

“I’ve always heard it’s a nice rally and I had a good proposal to come so I said, ‘OK it’s a good opportunity to discover a new rally with my girlfriend [and co-driver Laurene Godey] and to discover Azores’.

“I just tested the car for the first time [during testing last Wednesday], the feeling was good, a nice car to drive with a lot of agility and really fun to push.

“It was really nice [to win], they were really nice stages and we were lucky the weather was good for the rally. We really enjoyed it, but the future plan is to go to Mexico for the

next round [of the World Rally-Raid Championship] but other than that [there are] no other plans.”

Loeb will contest the Sonora Rally from April 22-28, round three of the W2RC, Prodrive-run Bahrain Raid Xtreme Hunter.

Meanwhile, Andreas Mikkelsen had been closing on Loeb for victory until he was delayed hitting a bank on the penultimate stage. Nevertheless the two-time Azores winner took second ahead of Nil Solans, Ole Christian Veiby and local legend Ricardo Moura, who is from Sao Miguel island, where the event was based. Erik Cais was sixth.

SETE CIDADES TEST A HIT FOR FRENCHMAN

Sebastien Loeb said he relished the chance to drive the Azores Rallye’s famous Sete Cidades stage – once he finally got to see where he was going.

Sete Cidades features a section along the rim of a volcanic crater lake and is ranked as one of the world’s most spectacular stages.

“I was happy to actually see something in the race, as during the recce I had planned to stop to take some pictures but it was foggy and

I’m not sure 100% what was in the [pacenote] book. There are a lot of crests, fast corners, a difficult downhill section in the end, but I really enjoyed it.”



Loeb was delighted to tackle the volcano-based stage

RALLY NEWS

JENNINGS STEPS UP TO RALLY2 FIESTA TO PROVE IT ON IRISH TAR

Tarmac championship winner determined to prove his hatchback can be a winner

Photos: Martin Walsh, Paul and Ben Lawrence



Jennings has faith in his Fiesta Rally2

By Jason Craig

Irish Tarmac champion Garry Jennings will step up to a Ford Fiesta Rally2 for Saturday's Circuit of Ireland in a bid to prove that the Fiesta can be competitive in the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship.

In recent times, many ITRC drivers have moved away from the Fiesta, choosing instead to field VW Polo GTi R5s, Citroen C3 Rally2s and, in the case of Sam and Josh Moffett, the Hyundai i20 N Rally2.

Jennings, however, feels that the Fiesta still has plenty to offer. He said: "Everyone seems to have turned away from it and gone down a different route but I didn't want to do that.

"M-Sport has been more than good to me since I moved to the Fiesta R5 and now the Fiesta

Rally2 and I think we can work closely together to make what is an already competitive car even better.

"People seem to have forgotten about it, but it continues to set fastest stage times and it is still winning rallies, so it is a car worth having.

"As far as expectations go, the big one for me is to try and punch in some quick stage times and keep upping my speed and getting more comfortable with the Fiesta as the event unfolds.

"To be in a position to debut the car in mid-Ulster – an area where my main sponsors do a lot of their business – and on the Circuit of Ireland is fantastic."

On the previous round of the ITRC, the West Cork Rally, there were only three Fiestas in the top 20 starters, compared to five VW Polos and seven Citroen C3s.

HONE'S PACE GOES UNREWARDED ON RETURN TO UK FORESTS

Northern Irishman Jordan Hone showed frontrunning pace on Rally North Wales in a rare foray to the UK forests in his Ford Fiesta R5.

Hone, who won the BTRDA 1400 title in 2016 in a Proton Satria, has mainly rallied in Ireland since tackling some rounds of the BRC in 2019 in an Opel Adam R2.

Now 27 years old, Hone

was immediately quick on Rally North Wales and pipped Matthew Hirst by two seconds on the opening Dyfnant stage. He then dropped time to Hirst in Gartheiniog before retiring with steering failure on the third stage.

Hone said: "I've always liked coming over here and we learnt a lot from doing events in the UK. I did recognise the stages

in Wales but the last time I was here was in the Proton and we finished Gartheiniog on fire! I love these stages."

Hone's main focus this year is the Irish Forestry Championship and he finished second last year to Patrick O'Brien. "This is good seat time when we have a gap in the calendar and we could do a couple more this year," he added.



Hone was running on the pace on North Wales event

SIX HUNDRED NOT OUT FOR VETERAN CO-DRIVER RYLAND JAMES

Welsh co-driver Ryland James competed on his 600th rally when he finished 24th on Rally North Wales alongside Gareth Lewis in a Ford Escort Mk1.

James was just 15 when he tackled his first road rally in late 1969. He has now co-driven across seven decades and 54 years. In stage rallying, he is notable for having partnered Glyn Jones, Geoff Smith and Gareth Lloyd and scored four top-20 finishes on Rally GB. He was third on the 2006 Roger Albert Clark Rally with Lloyd.

"That was my 600th rally and I plan to do more, but I don't expect to reach 700," said James on Rally North Wales. However, his next event will be the Dixies Challenge on Epynt alongside Phil Evans in a Mitsubishi Lancer E10.



James has hit 600 rallies

BARRABLE PLANS TO RIVAL MOFFETT ON THE CIRCUIT OF IRELAND

Robert Barrable says he plans to take the battle to defending champion Josh Moffett on Saturday's Circuit of Ireland in his Citroen C3 Rally2.

Ahead of round three of the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship, Barrable said that he had his Hyundai-mounted rival in his sights.

Barrable said: "If we turn up the way we did on the Sunday of West Cork, we would like to think we would be there or thereabouts. It was just that everything clicked,

we didn't do anything different. I think it's down to the battle and it sucks you in.

"There will be a number of factors like the stages and the weather, I don't know that area but I expect that Callum Devine should go very well. We need to get into a good rhythm from the start and keep the pressure on and see what happens."

The Circuit of Ireland has endured many changes throughout its history and Saturday's version continues the trend with a co-promoted

event. The Ulster Automobile Club has arranged the permit and road closing orders but has handed the running of the rally to Cookstown Motor Club under clerk of the course Wayne Turkington.

The 70-mile event encircles Cookstown, County Tyrone, with four stages – Wolfe's Hill, Mucker, The Hollow and Shanmaghry – run twice with service at the famous Cookstown 100 motorcycle race pits. The entry has attracted a maximum 120 crews with a further 18 on the reserve list.



Robert Barrable says he has pace to match Josh Moffett



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RALLY NEWS

Photos: Ben Lawrence, MartinWalsh



Hirst and Dear will double up

HIRST AND DEAR PLOT DOUBLE TITLE ASSAULT
Welsh champions aim for a repeat and BTRDA spoils too

By Paul Lawrence

Matthew Hirst and Declan Dear will chase both the Welsh and BTRDA Rally Championships this season and started their bid for a third Welsh crown with a dominant victory on Rally North Wales.
Hirst and Dear first won

the Welsh title in 2019 in their Mitsubishi Lancer E9 and then dominated the series in 2022 after stepping up to a Ford Fiesta R5. Hirst, 26, has retained the ex-Callum Black R5 for this season and is keen to challenge for both titles.
Hirst told MN: “We want to try and go one better than last year in the BTRDA but we’ll

be chasing Elliot Payne who will be tough to beat.”
Reigning BTRDA champion Payne is also contesting the British Rally Championship, but elected to miss the recce of the season-opening Malcolm Wilson Rally in order to score BTRDA points.
While his pace in Wales has been outstanding, Hirst is

keen build his speed in the Kielder forests. “I just want to try and go better out of Wales. Kielder for the Border Counties and Kielder Forest Rallies are really new to me,” he added.
Hirst has only contested two or three rallies in Kielder so far and missed last year’s Kielder Forest Rally due to a clash with co-driver Dear’s wedding.

WAUGH MOUNTS BRC PLAN TO FOLLOW HIS GRANDFATHER

Steve Waugh is contesting the British Rally Championship this season, driving a Fiesta R2T in the BRC4 category in only his second season of rallying.
Waugh, 28 years old from Dyserth in North Wales, contested seven forest rallies in his debut season last year in a Honda Civic but has now stepped up to the BRC in the footsteps

of his grandfather Gavin.
After four years as a lead technician for the M-Sport team, working on cars including those used by Sebastian Ogier in his 2018 WRC title season, Waugh has started rallying and was keen to progress into the BRC and emulate his grandfather.
Waugh said: “My grandfather competed in the British

championship in the 1970s alongside drivers like Russell Brookes, Jimmy McRae and Ari Vatanen. Starting from my first-ever rally in the Honda in February 2022, I hope to be competing in the BRC in Rally2 machinery during the final rounds of the 2024 championship.
“I’m looking to learn the new

car and BRC events ready for 2024 but the competition will be tough from the BRC Juniors as we compete in similar machinery.
The season will be full of challenges as the pace increases but opportunities to compete at this level don’t come along often so I aim to make the most of every rally.”



Waugh wants to follow in his grandad’s wheeltracks

EUGENE DONNELLY APPLAUDS IRISH ASPHALT PACE

Irish rally legend Eugene Donnelly says that the drivers currently at the top of Irish rallying are not receiving the credit they deserve.
Competing on last month’s Midland Moto Rally, Donnelly said: “Take the top six today, there are only seconds between them on the stages and the next day that order could change. The race at the front in the Tarmac and the National championship is fantastic. Even from my generation and the one before, we all had our cycle, we all had our battles – but this current era is not getting the recognition it deserves.
“The style of driving now is totally different to where I came from, I’m 56 years of age and I reckon with this car [Proton Iriz R5] I’m not even at 70% of what it can do. I was always totally accustomed to two-litre cars, bags of power, paddleshift



Donnelly says he has to work hard for pace

– a completely different style of driving.”
Now in the twilight of his career, Donnelly admitted: “My days of rallying are nearly

over and this is one of a few of my last swan songs. It’s brilliant to have my son Dermot onboard as co-driver.
“As a wee boy of five and

six years of age, he watched me through my heydays in rallying. I have always wanted him to do a rally with me so this is why we are here.”

HUMPHREYS MAKES RALLYING RETURN ON ASPHALT CLASH

On only his second rally in eight years Daniel Humphreys took his newly acquired Ford Escort Mk2 into the top six on last month’s AGBO Stages at Weston Park.
Best known for rallying a Mitsubishi Lancer E9 on forest events in 2013 and ’14 Humphreys finished second overall on the 2014 Mid Wales Stages. In more recent times he has been autograssing but has now been tempted back to rallying.

He has bought the ex-Rob Snowden Escort Mk2 with a 2.5-litre KGP engine. “I’m getting used to it and that event blew the cobwebs away,” said Humphreys, who had not done a rally since 2020.
“It was only my second ever asphalt rally and I was slowly getting used to it,” he said.
However, with a baby on the way this coming winter he doesn’t expect to do too many rallies and has no immediate plans for his next event.



Humphreys impressed with a top-six result on return

CARL SORENSON STAGES PORTREATH: SOUTH HAMS MOTOR CLUB BY IAN HARDEN

APRIL 1

FLEMING AND RUMARY MAKE AN EARLY BREAK COUNT IN CORNISH SHOWDOWN

Craig Fleming and Paul Rumary (Subaru Impreza) took their second consecutive win with a dominant display, setting eight consecutive fastest stage times to win the event by 2m35s from Dave Parnell/Pete Bold’s Ford Escort Mk1.
In changeable conditions and on a slippery stage surface, Fleming broke free from challenger Kevin Tappin (Darrian

T90) on SS2. From then on, his Impreza remained mechanically trouble-free as he stretched his lead ever further.
Runner-up Parnell used medium compound tyres that he changed from the front to the back after SS5 to dispute the other podium places with Tappin and Roger Harvey (Impreza), hotly pursued by Roger Henderson (Ford Fiesta Rally2) and Danielle Furzeland (Impreza).

Harvey’s rally ended with broken power steering, and Tappin suffered mechanical woes after SS5, leaving Parnell overcoming frequent wheelspin to take second.
Henderson’s Rally2 debut was rewarded with a third-placed finish, after battling for Class E honours with Furzeland. The two drivers were only five seconds apart after SS6, but a late tyre

change gave Henderson the edge in the closing miles. Behind Furzeland, James Brady slithered his Porsche 911 to Class D victory and fifth overall, climbing from 11th after SS2 to overhaul class leader Gary Parker (Peugeot 306) on SS5.
Josh Davey (MG ZR) held off Mark Clayton (Toyota Starlet) for sixth overall and second in Class C, only four seconds separating them.

Results
Organisers: South Hams Motor Club. **When:** April 1 **Where:** RRH Portreath, Cornwall. **Championships:** ASW/MC Sealed Surface; ACS/MC Tarmacadam. **Starters:** 47. **Stages:** 9
1 Craig Fleming/Paul Rumary (Subaru Impreza) 1h12m31s; 2 Dave Parnell/Pete Bold (Ford Escort Mk1) +2m35s; 3 Roger Henderson/Tommi Henderson (Ford Fiesta Rally2); 4 Danielle Furzeland/Mark Johnson (Subaru Impreza B13); 5 James Brady/Jack Brady (Porsche 911); 6 Joshua Davey/Paul Noonan (MG ZR); 7 Mark Clayton/Nic Clayton (Toyota Starlet); 8 Gary Parker/Kevin Moyses (Peugeot 306); 9 Richard Weatherley/Shawn Layland (Ford Fiesta Rally4); 10 Brian Stevens/Andy Hollingham (Honda Civic). **Class winners:** Paul Tappin/Richard Tappin (Talbot Sunbeam), Parnell/Bold, Brady/Brady, Henderson/Henderson, Danny Hedges/Ben Hall (Land rover Defender).

SPORTING SCENE NEWS

BRISCA F2 ROUND-UP

Chalkley slides to Brafeld glory**Chalkley took the win**

Ahead of the busy Easter period, a relatively quiet weekend of BRISCA Formula 2 racing brought wins for Emma Mellis and Ben Chalkley.

Northampton Shaleway staged its first meeting of the season with a 33-car field running all-in. After Josh Wilson had taken a maiden win in the opening heat, fellow teenager Tomson Streets looked set to emulate his feat in the final. But, amid light rain, he spun and handed the lead to Chalkley. The local driver finished well clear, repeating his opening-night success of three years earlier. Charlie England was second ahead of Andrew Palmer who got the better of his fellow star-graded drivers.

After a strong start to the season, Mellis hit fine form with a hat-trick of wins at Cowdenbeath. Having won both heats among another thin entry at the fearsome Racewall, Mellis started third for the final. She immediately passed Craig Reid, then shadowed Kieran Howie for a couple of laps before cutting inside to move ahead and build a commanding lead. Southern-based Dan Roots snatched second from Howie on the final lap, some distance behind the winner.

Six days earlier, local expert Robbie Dawson dominated the season opener at Crimond in the north of Scotland.

Mark Paulson

Results

Organiser: Crimond Raceway **When:** March 26 **Where:** Crimond Raceway **Starters:** 8.

1 Robbie Dawson; 2 Peter Watt; 3 Jason McDonald; 4 John Hogg; 5 Brian Hogg Jr; 6 Jon Hodgson; no other finishers.

Organiser: GMP Scotland **When:** April 1 **Where:** The Racewall, Cowdenbeath **Starters:** 11.

1 Emma Mellis; 2 Dan Roots; 3 Kieran Howie; 4 John Hogg; 5 Peter Watt; 6 Steven Burgoyne; 7 Paul Reid; 8 Jason Blacklock; 9 Craig Reid; no other finishers.

Organiser: Incarace/Spedeworth **When:** April 1 **Where:** Northampton Shaleway **Starters:** 33.

1 Ben Chalkley; 2 Charlie England; 3 Andrew Palmer; 4 Micky Brennan; 5 Billy Webster; 6 Liam Rennie; 7 Greg McKenzie; 8 Josh Wilson; 9 Aaron Petch; 10 Harley Thackra.

O'DONOVAN TO TWIN EURO CAMPAIGN WITH BRITISH RX TITLE DEFENCE

Teenager expands his horizons in Hansen Motorsport-supported Peugeot 208

Photos: Team RX Racing, Tom Banks, Red Bull Content Pool, Ant Jenkins, Colin Casserley



O'Donovan will use Peugeot 208



Teenager has a double 2023 attack

By Hal Ridge

Reigning British Rallycross champion Patrick O'Donovan will contest both the British and European Rallycross Championships in a works-built Peugeot 208 Supercar from Hansen Motorsport this year.

The 18-year-old tested the latest-spec internal combustion engine machine in Sweden with the Hansen squad last week, but the car will be run by the

Team RX Racing squad for 2023.

O'Donovan's programme is also being supported by Hansen Motorsport along with its Yellow Squad concern, with members of the team joining Team RX Racing for the opening rounds of the British Rallycross Championship this weekend at Lydden Hill.

O'Donovan became the youngest-ever British RX title-winner last year, driving an aging Ford Fiesta, and he also won rounds of the FIA RX2e all-electric World RX

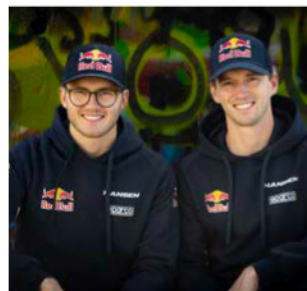
support series. He has now elected to move sideways into Euro RX for 2023 to continue building experience.

"We really worked hard on assessing what to do this year, and I think this is a great step forward in my career," said O'Donovan. "Ultimately my goal is to be in the World Championship and hopefully fight for the title, so these years are all about gaining as much experience as possible."

"I believe racing the 208 WRX in RX1 will do just that. It's a shame that there are

event clashes, we will miss Mondello Park for Portugal then see what we do later in the year in the clash between Germany and Pembrey. Going to the Hansen workshop last week was special, while we're running the car in our own team this year, we have a special relationship and it's amazing to be aligned with Hansen Motorsport."

O'Donovan's father, Ollie, will join his son on the grid in the UK and Europe this season, racing his Proton Iriz RX Supercar in the same events.



Kevin (l) and Timmy Hansen

HANSEN SIBLINGS BACK FOR MORE WORLD RX IN 2023

Multiple World Rallycross Championship-winning team Hansen Motorsport has retained its drivers Timmy and Kevin Hansen for the 2023 World RX season but not just because they are the sons of team owner Kenneth Hansen, Hansen Sr has reiterated.

Timmy Hansen, the 2019 World RX drivers' champion

has driven for the team in since World RX's inception in 2014, while Kevin Hansen, the 2016 Euro RX champion, has raced full time in World RX since 2017.

The squad last won the teams' championship in 2021 but has worked over the winter months to further develop its Peugeot 208 RX1e machines in the bid

to take the fight to 2022 pacesetter Kristoffersson Motorsport this year.

Kenneth Hansen said. "We are grateful to have Timmy and Kevin as drivers. Many people think that this is just how it is because we are family, but it is not granted that they will drive for us so we are grateful that we have two very strong drivers."



The Harris' electric RX Mini

MINI GOES ON A CHARGE IN 5 NATIONS RALLYCROSS

The first all-electric rallycross Supercar in the UK will make its debut this weekend in the opening rounds of the British Rallycross Championship 5 Nations Trophy at Lydden Hill driven by father-and-son pairing Steve and Jake Harris.

The SH Racing squad has been working on the retro-fit of a STARD-created 450kW

(613bhp) four-wheel-drive powertrain for over 18 months, and tested the Mini RX for the first-time last week.

Based on a Prodrive-built Mini WRC platform, previously used in World RX by drivers such as Liam Doran and Guy Wilks, the Harris Mini is the first electric car to be built to race alongside traditional

internal combustion engine cars in UK rallycross.

"The project has taken a long time to get to this point, but the engineering on it is stunning and I was amazed by the performance when I first drove it last week," said owner Steve Harris, who will race it on Saturday, before son Jake takes the helm on Monday.

KRISTOFFERSSON AND VEIBY RALLYX NORDIC

Swedish team Kristoffersson Motorsport will once again field a brace of cars in the 2023 RallyX Nordic series, which gets underway in Denmark later this month.

Five-time World RX champion Johan Kristoffersson won the Nordic title in 2021 and contested selected rounds last season. This season he will be joined in the squad racing a pair of Volkswagen Polo Supercars by his World RX team-mate, Ole Christian Veiby.

"At the moment, our goal is to participate in as many events as possible," said KMS boss Tommy Kristoffersson. "It will depend on how things go for us in World RX. WRX remains our priority and, of course, if we have any difficulties, we might have to put our RallyX programme on pause."

"Nevertheless, I am hopeful that we can participate in as many races as possible this year."

BRISCA F1: NORTHAMPTON BY COLIN CASSERLEY

APRIL 1

HARRIS PUTS HIS FOOT DOWN TO SHOW HIS BRISCA F1 CLASS

Tom Harris dominated the meeting at Northampton on Saturday night, winning the final by over half a lap. It mirrored his earlier domination in his heat, which he claimed by a similar winning margin.

Despite heavy rain in the days preceding the meeting, promoter Deane Wood and his staff had the track in almost perfect condition and even a late rain shower prior to the final failed to disrupt the actoin.

Sam Brigg, Callum Gill and Colin

Goodswen battled for the early lead of the final before Gill and Goodswen tangled. That left Brigg to open up a sizeable lead. Further back, Harris was slicing through the field and moved into second just shy of half distance.

A few laps later, Brigg was sidelined with mechanical problems. "I blew a differential," he grimaced. "I have never done well here, but I won my heat and that gave me some confidence. I was going well in the final, but it wasn't meant to be."

Harris assumed the lead and never backed off. Mat Newson moved past Mark Woodhull for second in the closing stages, with Woodhull holding on for third.

Winner Harris said: "The car felt good, it was at the end of last season, but I never got it hooked up in the [2022 late-year] Shootout [series]. I had a target on my back then and just did enough to win the title."

"I went out tonight to show that I wanted to win, I want to win every race I

am in, so I drove the wheels off it. I didn't know how far I won by, but I am happy."

Newson picked up his third-consecutive podium place. He said: "I am happy with that, I am using old tyres, I will put on new tyres for the bigger races and hope that I will be able to get closer to Harris then."

Results

Organisers: Incarace, BRISCA F1 **Where:** Northampton Shaleway **When:** April 1 **Starters:** 25. 1 Tom Harris; 2 Mat Newson; 3 Mark Woodhull; 4 Joe Booth; 5 James Morris; 6 Casey Englestone; 7 Colin Goodswen; 8 Sam Makim; 9 Callum Gill; 10 Willie Skoyles.



Harris was pleased with margin of win

HISTORICS

DOWN THE WORKSHOP

1971 FORD ESCORT MK1

AFW 66K
Current owner: Andrew Stokes



The Escort in typical pose...

It is a well-known car
AFW 66K is one of the best-known Ford Escort Mk1s in historic rallying. It was used by the late David Stokes for a decade and has since done six seasons with David's younger brother Andrew. From 2006 to 2015 David and Guy Weaver did more than 100 rallies in the car and won the British Historic Rally Championship a record four times.

It's been rallied for 20 years
Andrew explains: "It was rebuilt with a new bodysell after David's big accident on the Isle of Man in 2004 and that's still the same bodysell now. It's had a few dings and it's only ever rallied with the two of us. It's been in the family since about 2002 when David came back to rallying. I've now rallied it for six years. This car is special to the family."

It left the family briefly
"David did his last event in it, which was the Harry Flatters in 2015. He was very determined on that rally, but he got to service and collapsed. That was the cancer starting to take hold. Hugh Davis then bought it and was going to put it into his collection. I had the Avenger at the time and I was talking to Hugh and he said: 'Well have the car back as a family car.' So we did a deal."

David was very well known
David, who enjoyed great success in national rallying in the 1970s, was a popular figure in rallying. Andrew said: "That's what we've got to try and do: enjoy what we're doing. David was good!"

Initially, Andrew was the co-driver
"I co-drove him for the first year when he came back and we fell out! It was the Astra Stages and I think it was the third stage. We came into this hairpin and it was dusty. We did a 360 and I didn't have a clue where I was! He said: 'where have I got to go?' And I said: 'I can't see, it's just dust!'"

Time for a change of co-driver
"When the dust settled I said: 'Go that way,' in a nice laid back way. And he was going mad at me. So I got all the notes and just chucked them in the back of the car and said: 'Now find your own f**king way!' So we fell out at that point but I still loved him. So he said he'd got to get someone else to co-drive and he got Den Golding."

CHILMAN TAKES ON FIAT AND PORSCHE IN BATTLE FOR BHRC

Escort man thrilled with early season rallying form with two wins

By Paul Lawrence

After the opening two rounds of the British Historic Rally Championship, Roger Chilman and Patrick Walsh have taken the early advantage with two maximum scores. However, Chilman is quick to acknowledge that maintaining his championship lead is going to be hard work. For the first time in many years, there are two rivals to the all-conquering Ford Escort Mk2s as Nick Elliott and Dave Price (Fiat 131) and Richard Tuthill and Stephane Prevot (Porsche 911) showed that their cars are a match for the Escorts. Chilman said: "It's tough competition so another maximum on Rally North Wales was ideal. We found a better pace than we thought we might." Meanwhile, Tuthill made



Chilman says he will have to push hard

a storming return to UK rallying after an absence of more than a decade and, despite a time-consuming off on the opening stage, showed that he and the Porsche are serious victory contenders. Tuthill said: "It was all about understanding where the pace

was and if I could still drive a car. It was great to be in a car again and the pace wasn't bad. It was wonderful to be back." Elliott currently lies second to Chilman in the points followed by the rapid Escorts of Tom Walster, Adrian Hetherington, Richard Jordan and Robert

Gough. Martin McCormack showed winning pace on Rally North Wales but was hampered by an opening-stage puncture. Now comes a break in the BHRC calendar before the action resumes with round three on the Plains Rally on May 20.

Photos: Paul Lawrence

THOMPSON SHAKES DOWN HISTORIC Mk2 IN NORTH WALES

Yorkshireman Paul Thompson gave his freshly built Ford Escort Mk2 BDG a debut run on Rally North Wales. The car has been built primarily for the Roger Albert Clark Rally and Thompson will use it alongside his existing non-historic Escort Mk2. "It was always the plan to do the Roger Albert in an historic-spec car," said Thompson, who spent last year in the BTRDA

series in his Vauxhall-engined car. "This year we'll split the time between the two cars and keep the historic mainly for November. Rally North Wales was a bit of a test day with the new engine," he added. "We had no problems at all. It just took a bit of getting used to." Thompson and co-driver Josh Davison also plan to contest the Speyside Stages and Trackrod Rally for practice on night stages before the November event.



Paul Thompson enjoyed his North Wales shakedown

STEVENSON-WHEELER ADDS ASPHALT-SPEC HISTORIC ESCORT

Regular gravel rally contender Barry Stevenson-Wheeler is close to completing a second Ford Escort Mk2 in historic asphalt specification. Stevenson-Wheeler, a regular

at the head of gravel historic rallying for several seasons, plans to retain his existing car for forest events and use the new car for a selection of asphalt rallies. He hopes to debut the new car

on the Dixies Challenge on Epynt on April 30, and then take it to the Manx Rally two weeks later. "It's nearly identical to the old car," said Stevenson-Wheeler.

"I used all the spare bits I had to build the asphalt car." His good friend Steve Chaney-North already has an immaculate Escort Mk2 for asphalt.

LISTER STORM GT1 RACER BACK ON TRACK AHEAD OF GOODWOOD DEMO



Brundle and the two Verdon-Roes drove the seven-litre car

The 2000 FIAGT Championship-winning Lister Storm GTM002 was back out in anger at Donington Park last Thursday. Driven in period by Julian Bailey and Jamie Campbell-Walter to five wins in the 10-round championship, it was one of 18 Storm GT1s built by Laurence Pearce's team across a decade. It later moved to Creation

Autosportif and was raced regularly until 2006. The seven-litre V12 Jaguar-engined car's owner Bobby Verdon-Roe, one of the period drivers, was at the wheel along with his nephew Martin and Alex Brundle. "We don't have any plans to race the car but will be demonstrating it at the Goodwood Members' meeting next week," Verdon-Roe confirmed.

IN BRIEF

Sones remembered
Friends of the late Mike Sones gathered at the Curborough sprint course on Friday to scatter the ashes of the respected co-driver and organiser. Sones' ashes were scattered next to the finish line of the popular Lichfield venue in accordance with his wishes.

Allcomers offer
Two Allcomers grids for any pre-2000 car will run at the HSCC Cadwell Park meeting on Sunday, 7 May with an entry fee of just £295 for qualifying and two 20-minute races. For the Coronation Cup races, to honour the coronation of King Charles III on Saturday, 6 May, there will be one closed-wheel grid and one open-wheel grid to accommodate as wide a range of cars as possible.

Donington Masters
The Masters Historic Racing season will get underway at Donington Park this weekend (Friday and Saturday) with an 11-race programme. Endurance Legends, Masters Sports Cars, Gentleman Drivers, GT Trophy and Pre '66 Touring Cars will be joined by four HGPCA races featuring both pre- and post-war grids. Three races run on Friday with the balance on Saturday.

Hughes is go
Details have been unveiled of the Hughes Rally in Kent, round four of the MN HRCR Clubmans Rally Championship. One of very few remaining rallies run in Kent, the May 27 rally will be based near Ashford and will use more the Manston airport site for special tests along with 120 miles of road regularity sections. Regulations are available from hughesrally.blackpalfrey.co.uk

Expert panels
The HSCC Historic Touring Car Championship will feature a new category for pre '66 cars running with all steel panels. To encourage a wider range of pre '66 cars, the new classes will cater for cars with all steel body panels and any appropriate engine size. The regulations and point-scoring system have been amended to give these cars an equal chance of scoring points and winning the championship.

Taking Courage
James Littlejohn and Harvey Stanley gave DK Engineering's Courage C65 Judd V8 LMP2 a shakedown run at Donington Park last week before it heads for the Peter Auto Series Endurance Racing Legends series. The chassis originally built in 2003, was raced at the 2006 Le Mans 24 hours by Franck Hahn, Jean-Francois Leroch and Ed Morris but was an early retirement.

Spanish inquisition
Three BMW M3 E30s were disqualified from the opening round of the FIA European Historic Rally Championship. On the 71st Costa Brava Rally, which ran in Spain in mid-March, the cars of Norway's Trond Lyseng and Frenchmen Thierry Marcobal and Dominique Lesourd were all disqualified over engine specification issues.

FEATURE

BRITISH GT 2023: A RACE OF CHAMPIONS

In an entry packed with stars picking a winner is nearly impossible, as **Graham Keilloh** explains



Loggie faces mighty foes for his title defence in 2023

At this time of year when championships are poised to get underway, we all look at the season's runners and riders to scan for likely title challengers.

But British GT's entry for 2023 is one of a particular kind, where in its top-line GT3 contest you look for the stick-on championship contenders, and before you know it you've picked five or six...

Little wonder. British GT's 18 GT3 cars on its capacity full-season 36-car entry is not only its largest GT3 turnout since 2014, it has a conspicuous world-class air with no fewer than eight manufacturer factory drivers. And plenty of potent-looking combinations.

Perhaps therefore a good place to start is with the incumbent. Amateur driver Ian Loggie is back to defend his relentlessly crushing overall drivers' title of last year. Yet while his Mercedes GT3 model and star Pro driving partner Jules Gounon are the same, they'll be in new surroundings as Loggie has switched to 2 Seas Motorsport from RAM Racing.

Loggie nevertheless rates his title chances for 2023 as "pretty high", and he's not one given to hyperbole. He's also mindful of what was key to his 2022 title.

"You don't have to be fastest, but the most consistent..."

Champion Ian Loggie



Amateur ace Cottingham is joined by four-time champion Adam

"I don't think you have to be the fastest, you have to be the most consistent," he adds. "A lot of it last year was down to not making mistakes."

Even better for Loggie, Gounon is to complete the entire 2023 season aside from one race. Last year, a combination of factors meant Gounon effectively only took part in three races of the nine.

Plenty indeed has changed at RAM between seasons, as team founder Dan Shufflebottom has stepped back and its



Star Marciello has joined line-up

Am driver John Ferguson, whose family owned business Edwin Lowe Group purchased the outfit last year, has installed a virtually all-new management and technical team.

Its on-track line-up is different too, with now a single Mercedes for Ferguson. But amid all the change, Ferguson could hardly have countered with more of a winner than his newly acquired driving partner GT superstar Raffaele Marciello. Moreover Marciello is set for a full season.

The main question is whether Ferguson can match his Am rivals, but he has been putting in a lot of preparation and accepts that Marciello's presence gives him nowhere to hide.

When assessing likely British GT3 championship winners though it rarely pays to look far beyond routine title-bagger Barwell, and that outfit has

ENTRY LIST				
British GT championship 2023				
GT3				
NO	TEAM/ENTRANT	CAR	DRIVERS	CATEGORY
1	2 Seas Motorsport	Mercedes-AMG	Ian Loggie/Jules Gounon	Pro-Am
3	Greystone GT	Mercedes-AMG	Mike Price/Callum Macleod	Pro-Am
4	2 Seas Motorsport	Mercedes-AMG	James Cottingham/Jonny Adam	Pro-Am
8	Team Abba Racing	Mercedes-AMG	Richard Neary/Sam Neary	Silver-Am
11	Paddock Motorsport	McLaren 720S	Mark Smith/Martin Plowman	Pro-Am
13	Race Lab	McLaren 720S	Lucky Khara/Euan Hankey	Pro-Am
15	RAM Racing	Mercedes-AMG	John Ferguson/Raffaele Marciello	Pro-Am
24	Greystone GT	McLaren 720S	Andrey Borodin/Oliver Webb	Pro-Am
27	Optimum Motorsport	McLaren 720S	Mark Radcliffe/Rob Bell	Pro-Am
42	Race Lab	McLaren 720S	Iain Campbell/James Kell	Silver-Am
67	Orange Racing by JMH	McLaren 720S	Simon Orange/Michael O'Brien	Pro-Am
72	Barwell Motorsport	Lamborghini Huracan	Mark Sansom/Will Tregurtha	Silver-Am
77	Enduro Motorsport	McLaren 720S	Morgan Tillbrook/Marcus Clutton	Pro-Am
78	Barwell Motorsport	Lamborghini Huracan	Shaun Balfe/Sandy Mitchell	Pro-Am
88	Garage 59	McLaren 720S	Alex West/Marvin Kirchhofer	Pro-Am
91	Century Motorsport	BMW M4	Darren Leung/Dan Harper	Pro-Am
93	Sky Tempesta Racing	McLaren 720S	Kevin Tse/Chris Froggatt	Silver-Am
97	Beechdean AMR	Aston Martin Vantage	Andrew Howard/Ross Gunn	Pro-Am

GT4				
NO	TEAM/ENTRANT	CAR	DRIVERS	CATEGORY
7	Paddock Motorsport	McLaren Artura	Kavi Jundu/Tom Rawlings	Pro-Am
12	One Motorsport	Mercedes-AMG	Ed McDermott/Michael Broadhurst	Pro-Am
14	Century Motorsport	BMW M4	Michael Johnston/Chris Salkeld	Pro-Am
17	Enduro Motorsport	McLaren Artura	Harry George/Harry Nunn	Silver
18	Team Parker Racing	Porsche 718 Cayman	Zac Meakin/Dan Vaughan	Silver
22	Century Motorsport	BMW M4	Carl Cavers/Lewis Plato	Pro-Am
23	R Racing	Aston Martin Vantage	Josh Miller/Seb Hopkins	Silver
29	Race Lab	McLaren Artura	Ian Gough/Tom Wrigley	Pro-Am
36	DTO Motorsport	McLaren Artura	Josh Rowledge/Aston Millar	Silver
50	Drivetac	Mercedes-AMG	Sam Maher-Loughnan/James Wallis	Silver
55	Raceway Motorsport	Ginetta G56	Michael Crees/Thomas Holland	Pro-Am
56	Raceway Motorsport	Ginetta G56	Freddie Tomlinson/Stuart Middleton	Silver
61	Academy Motorsport	Ford Mustang	Erik Evans/Matt Cowley	Silver
62	Academy Motorsport	Ford Mustang	Will Moore/Matt Nicoll-Jones	Silver
68	Team Brit	McLaren 570S	Aaron Morgan/Bobby Trundle	Pro-Am
80	Toro Verde GT	Ginetta G56	Joe Wheeler/Esme Hawkey	Silver
86	Toro Verde GT	Ginetta G56	Ian Duggan/James Townsend	Am
90	Optimum Motorsport	McLaren Artura	Jack Brown/Charles Clarke	Silver

freshly steeled up for 2023. This is particularly with rapid and experienced Am driver Shaun Balfe leaving his own team to join incumbent Sandy Mitchell in one of Barwell's two upgraded Lamborghini Huracan Evo2s.

Then there's James Cottingham, who last year in a 2 Seas Mercedes on his full British GT debut was one of the strongest Ams and alongside Lewis Williamson fought for the title until the final round. With more even luck he'd have got more.

And this year he is joined by British GT class act Jonny Adam, and while Adam is due to miss two events with clashes his substitute Phil Keen hardly seems a step down. Adam is also known for being an extraordinary coach of his Am partner. It goes some way to explaining his four British GT titles.

As for the rest of the factory drivers, we have Aston Martin's Ross Gunn who is

paired with the returning two-time champion Am Andrew Howard and his multiple title-winner Beechdean outfit. Also BMW young gun Dan Harper joins Darren Leung in Century's M4 GT3 that won last year's season-closing race when Leung was paired with Alexander Sims.

McLaren's Marvin Kirchhofer shares a 720S with Alex West and leading GT World Challenge Europe outfit Garage 59, and this very combination came just half a second shy of winning last year's Silverstone 500 in a guest appearance. Another McLaren pilot Rob Bell shares a 720S with Mark Radcliffe racing for returning 2018 champion Optimum Motorsport.

But don't think even now you've got your head around the likely championship contenders, as it's not only with the factory stars that you'll find them. There's the Enduro McLaren



Balfe joining Mitchell in a new Lamborghini at multiple title-winning Barwell looks a potent proposition



It's not only entries with factory drivers that are a threat, Enduro's GT3 McLaren is set for a title charge

shared by Am Morgan Tillbrook – who Loggie routinely cites as a major threat – and Marcus Clutton. The effort’s regular upward trajectory has one logical conclusion in 2023. “We always said it was a three-year plan to win British GT; we’re coming into our third year now,” Clutton notes.

Plus there’s the reigning GT Cup champion Orange McLaren shared by Simon Orange and 2020 title-battler Michael O’Brien. It sampled British GT in last year’s season closer and likely would have won without a pitstop delay. Team Abba too over the past couple of years has shown pace that’s rarely been rewarded in results.

And it all kicks off this Easter weekend with a frenetic bank holiday Monday made up of two hour-long sprints. For more than one reason, you’ll not know where to look. ■

BRITISH GT 2023 CALENDAR



Packed Oulton

Meeting 1
When: April 8-10
Where: Oulton Park International
What: 2 x 1-hour races
2022 race 1 winner: GT3 – Shaun Balfe/Adam Carroll (Balfe Motorsport Audi); GT4 – Richard Williams/Sennan Fielding (Steller Motorsport Audi)
2022 race 2 winner: GT3 – Ian Loggie/Jules Gounon (RAM Racing Mercedes); GT4 – Williams/Fielding
British GT has its traditional Easter weekend Oulton Park kick off and its intense Monday with two sprint races. Oulton’s layout, plus the one-

hour races dictating strategy, mean Saturday qualifying is vital. Both last year’s eventual GT3 and GT4 champions laid down their markers in Cheshire with strong showings across the double header.

Meeting 2
When: May 6-7
Where: Silverstone GP
What: 1 x 3-hour race
2022 winner: GT3 – Adam Balor/Sandy Mitchell (Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini); GT4 – Matt Topham/Darren Turner (Newbridge Motorsport Aston Martin)
The blue-riband Silverstone 500 often attracts guest entries that won’t be eligible for points but often battle right at the front (last year they accounted for second and third places). Also the stretched three-hour contest gives more scope than usual for strategy variation, plus possibly an advantage for shorter-

stopping GT4 Pro-Am runners.

Meeting 3
When: May 27-28
Where: Donington Park GP
What: 1 x 2-hour race
2022 winner: GT3 – Morgan Tillbrook/Marcus Clutton (Enduro Motorsport McLaren); GT4 – Matt Cowley/Marco Signoretti (Academy Motorsport Ford Mustang)
The first visit of the usual two to Donington Park returns to being two hours in length having grown to three last year. Look out for the Morgan Tillbrook/Marcus Clutton Enduro McLaren too, as two of its three British GT race wins ever have come at Donington. Last year it won this race by a minute.

Meeting 4
When: June 17-18
Where: Snetterton 300
What: 2 x 1-hour races

2022 race 1 winner: GT3 – Ian Loggie/Callum Madeod (RAM Racing Mercedes); GT4 – Josh Miller/Jamie Day (R Racing Aston Martin)
2022 race 2 winner: GT3 – John Ferguson/Ulyse De Pauw (RAM Racing Mercedes); GT4 – Jack Brown/Will Burns (Century Motorsport BMW)
Snetterton is long regarded as Mercedes country in British GT3, and so it proved last year with both races dominated by the RAM and 2 Seas Mers. In both races of the double-header though punctures denied 2 Seas probable victory, letting RAM in.

Meeting 5
When: July 22-23
Where: Algarve
What: 1 x 3-hour race
2022 winner: N/A
A step into the unknown as British GT switches its away day from usual Spa to the Algarve for the first time. Quite how tyres and equipment react to



Battling at Brands

what will presumably be baking July Portuguese temperatures remains to be discovered. What’s more the race is three hours rather than Spa’s two.

Meeting 6
When: September 9-10
Where: Brands Hatch GP
What: 1 x 2-hour race
2022 winner: GT3 – Morgan Tillbrook/Marcus Clutton (Enduro Motorsport McLaren); GT4 – Matt Topham/Darren Turner (Newbridge Motorsport Aston Martin)
British GT races here often offer

drama, sometimes of the late variety: the final lap in 2019 is a particular online favourite while last year technical failure robbed Team Abba of victory at the last. Watch out for Jonny Adam who has won here in British GT four times.

Meeting 7
When: October 21-22
Where: Donington Park GP
What: 1 x 2-hour race
2022 winner: GT3 – Darren Leung/Alexander Sims (Century Motorsport BMW); GT4 – Tom Edgar/Jordan Collard (Toyota Gazoo Racing UK)
Almost certain to be a self-styled ‘Donington Decider’, as almost never are British GT overall titles decided in advance. The event usually bowls googlies to those looking for a clean run to the title, and this one is held a week later than last year, meaning British autumnal weather is even more likely to do its worst.



Of last year’s title battlers only the R Racing Aston remains

GT4 – all change

British GT’s GT4 championship contest looks as wide open as that of its GT3 big brother, but for rather different reasons.

Of the three entries that battled for the GT4 championship at last year’s Donington Park finale, two are gone and the other is altered. And in this newly cleared field, it now looks anyone’s game.

Reigning champions Richard Williams, Sennan Fielding and Steller Audi decamp to the Le Mans Cup, while the Newbridge Aston Martin Vantage Pro-Am duo of Matt Topham and multiple Le Mans winner Darren Turner also does not return.

That leaves R Racing’s Vantage and its all-teenage driver line-up, which made its debut last year. But even therein one of its drivers Jamie Day, who impressed in 2022, has left for GT4 European.

His erstwhile partner Josh Miller is joined though by another rapid teenager Seb Hopkins, who showed promise last year in a Team Parker Porsche Cayman, and they still have eyes on the title.

Change is a theme on GT4’s 2023 entry, as only two efforts are unchanged since last year. Even a couple of cars are new, in the McLaren Artura plus BMW’s new M4, which multiple-champion Century has two of.

There is, though, championship-contending pedigree on the entry with Academy Mustang stalwart Matt Cowley. He was in title contention at 2020’s final round then finished second in 2021’s standings. He likely would have achieved similar last year without extended foul luck.

For 2023 he’s alongside 19-year-old American single-seater racer Erik Evans.

Also contradicting the theme of change is that three British GT4 champions return, threatening the statistic that no-one has won GT4’s title twice.

Academy team owner, and 2008 champion, Matt Nicoll-Jones is behind the wheel again in the squad’s now two-Mustang line-up. The 2017 champion Stuart Middleton returns from racing Lamborghinis in continental Europe to compete alongside 2022 freshman Freddie Tomlinson in one of category debutant – and multiple Ginetta title-winner – Raceway Motorsport’s two G56s. Former British Touring Car racer Michael Crees is in Raceway’s other car with 2022 GT4 Academy runner-up Tom Holland.

While Daniel Vaughan returns to full-time competition for the first time since taking his 2020 crown, switching to a Parker Cayman in an interesting-looking pairing with youngest-in-the-field Zac Meakin.

Other entries look intriguing too, not least the budding DTO McLaren that has the last two Ginetta Junior champions – Josh Rowledge and Aston Millar – sharing the wheel. The hot-shoe duo are confident of a championship charge.

Reigning GT Cup GT4 champions Sam Maher-Loughnan and James Wallis also join the party, as does British GT champion Optimum making its first British GT4 appearance since 2019. GT3 frontrunner Enduro Motorsport expands to British GT4 for the first time.

FEATURE

JOHNNY HERBERT AND BILLY MONGER: LIFTING THE LID ON F1

Overcoming life-changing accidents and having a passion for F1 has brought the TV pundit pair together for a new venture, as **Graham Keilloh** finds out



Monger and Herbert pair up

Johnny Herbert and Billy Monger need little introduction to Formula 1 fans. In Herbert's case this is as a three-time grand prix winner – with 160 F1 starts and also a Le Mans victory – and as one of Britain's most popular and determined racers ever.

Herbert and Monger also share renown from having come through life-changing motorsport accidents, with Herbert recovering heroically from leg injuries sustained in a gargantuan Formula 3000 smash at Brands Hatch in 1988, and Monger doing similar from a British Formula 4 crash at Donington Park in 2017. Both of them too have in recent times been lively and prominent F1 television pundits, Herbert on Sky Sports and Monger on Channel 4.

And there's now another way to get their take on all matters F1. As the pair have come together to present a recently launched twice-weekly podcast called Lift the Lid. Each week they offer one episode where they chew over the week's F1 news, and another episode titled 'Team Radio' where they answer fans' submitted questions.

While Herbert and Monger come from different generations it is clear from listening to their audio outputs that they share a natural chemistry, as well as a passion for F1.

We are grateful that they took time out of their busy schedules to answer Motorsport News readers' questions on their new venture, on F1 and on their careers more broadly. And to ask the questions we met Herbert and Monger on a day they were recording a special podcast episode at Brands. A significant venue for Herbert and for, as we discover, more than one reason. We discover them both too in their familiar engaging and straight-talking form.

So we'll start with asking what has brought this duo together.

Question: How did you get the idea to do a podcast together?

Jim Thomson

Via email

Billy Monger: "So after I had my accident Johnny was one of the first people to come and see me, so that's where our relationship stemmed from. He was really good to me and my family, he'd been through something similar so it was nice at that early stage for me to hear those stories and see what he'd done in the sport since."

"So that's where we met, and since Netflix came out with Drive to Survive, there was a lot of my mates from school who never really used to care about motorsport even when I was competing myself and doing it, they maybe would ask how I finished at the weekend and then that would be the end of the conversation. And all of a sudden they start asking me all these questions about 'oh Pierre Gasly's

my favourite' or 'so and so's my favourite' or 'I'm a big McLaren fan', I'm like what you talking about? You've never been involved [interested] in motorsport."

"So I realised there's a lot of new fans to Formula 1 who maybe don't know that much about the sport because Drive to Survive is like a brief explanation of Formula 1 but it doesn't as a fan tell you the ins and outs of the sport so that was where the idea for finding a way of doing it came about."

"And then the podcast idea and Johnny with that relationship we had and the fact we're from different generations and Johnny's raced guys I looked up to when I was a kid and in and around Formula 1 and top end of motorsport, and I've been racing against and know a lot of younger guys that have come into Formula 1. I thought one that we'd have fun together doing it and that was important to me because I didn't want to just do it for the sake of doing it, but also I thought that we'd be able to both give our opinions and use our knowledge of the drivers and just being racing drivers ourselves to hopefully give a bit of information to new fans of the sport and get them involved."

"Also fans that have been involved in Formula 1 for years and like the sport [are also a target audience] so I thought it was a good way of combining the two and having some fun whilst doing it."

Johnny Herbert: "And for me it was interesting, bringing my handful of fans that I've got, bringing them across."

BM: "He's got a fan club this man!"

JH: "Fan club! Not anymore, not anymore. But no it was when he first contacted me it was obvious, it was the right thing to do. Partly because of what we've been through and how we came out the other side of that but it's also the varying experiences that we've had and I know Billy's raced a lot against the guys who are on the grid."

"So that's important, because he knows how they think and how they work when they're on the race track, and I know from my experiences of what they're thinking when they're in the car as well. But then when you go into discussions it's good to have our own opinions on whatever's happened on the track that we see at a particular weekend. We haven't had anything particularly bad at the moment."

BM: "No, it's been a fairly tame start to the season [said before Melbourne]."

JH: "That's the word, quite tame. But it won't stay like that. But then it's getting your opinions of what's going on throughout that given weekend, and it's enjoyable because we can have that natural banter rather than sort of a forced banter that doesn't bounce, you know what I mean? So it seems to get lost."

"So that's been important as well, and the podcasting bit is sort of new to me, I've always been sort of aware of it, but it was just a perfect opportunity at the right time to be perfectly honest. And it's a good time because of the way F1 is at the moment, because it's having its little boom at the present time, people are loving it, we love it anyway, so why not discuss it with everybody else? It's not just about our opinions, it's also the fans who listen to it as well, their opinions, questions as well."

BM: "Getting their questions in the mix."

JH: "Which is nice, because some of them are from people it seems who haven't had that many years watching it, but there are the ones who have had many many years watching it. [The new fans] ask sometimes what you would think are easy questions but they're not, because they're just new to the sport but it's helping them, like the Drive to Survive it just helps people get more absorbed in the sport itself so I find that enjoyable."

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Herbert's life-changing 1988 F3000 race starts



By the looks of things they enjoyed our questions...

"Johnny was one of the first to visit me in hospital"

Billy Monger

FEATURE



Herbert in recent years has been a familiar face on our TV screens

MN: And I understand you're here today Johnny retracing your steps of your 1988 accident, so what's that been like?

JH: "It's been good. We've been discussing it because it didn't start then, it started way before, it started in Formula Ford, the Festival, that was my first big car win was here. My first test I did in a Formula 1 car was here, on the Indy circuit, and of course I had my big crash. So the early days were very important as well. Actually my first job, I always forget about that, my first job I ever had was here, there was a karting track on the top of the hill over there [points to the area behind Colin Chapman Way, outside the track parallel to the start-finish straight], I used to work there during a grand prix weekend and other various weekends, because I used to work just up the road."

"So yeah so there's a lot of stepping stones that have been laid here. We came back and looked around and went wow it's such a great track, you just look here and still it's more or less the same as when I was here [racing]. I think Graham Hill [Bend] has changed, I think Dingle Dell has changed and that's it, I think Westfield's the same. And that's

what's lovely, so I've got a lot of history from old."

BM: "It's been nice from my side of things to hear about Johnny's accident, how he bounced back from it, in more detail because like I say Johnny saw me when I was in hospital, but I didn't know the ins and outs of what went on and how he bounced back and what he did afterwards and also like Johnny said how he got here in the first place."

"And Brands Hatch is my local track, it's been my local track since I was growing up so it's nice for me to come here. I've raced here myself, I love the place like Johnny. As a driver out the back especially on the Grand Prix circuit it is high speed, high commitment, that's the stuff as a driver I love so it's been fascinating to hear all about it and relate what he went through to I went through which is what brought us together in the first place."

JH: "Yeah and it was nice, we went to the Kentagon [Brands Hatch restaurant] and had some lunch in there. One of the girls that was serving the food was serving the food when I used to race here, so she's still there! And then there was the guy who's got a BMW and he's racing

round and he's met an F1 driver so that was quite nice, bits like that, and then you [Monger] met the other guy."

BM: "Yeah my old driving coach, we met him. Being at race tracks as racing drivers is where we're in our element regardless so the fact that we're at Brands Hatch and we're unlocking those stories of my accident, Johnny's accident and going through it all it's been a nice process."

JH: "It's lovely seeing this happen [track day running]. This is their little life, this is what they love. We've been very lucky, we've been in race cars, but this is their fun, this is their little kick that we got, it's exactly the same, so it's nice, nice to come and see it."

Question: What tends to unite and divide your perspectives and views on F1, are there generational differences?

Lucy Graham

Via email

JH: "Well it was better in my day!" [Laughs]

BM: "Couldn't disagree more!"

JH: "It's one of those things: was it better in the '50s or '60s, '70s or '80s, '90s, '00s? It's just different. Were they better in the

'60s because someone died every weekend and they had to go through that every single race weekend they went to, compared to now where the safety's that much better? Again it's just different."

"Now technology's moved on, safety has become better and better and stronger and stronger since people like Jackie [Stewart] and Niki [Lauda] and various other drivers got on that bandwagon of straw bales that just used to lean up against a lamppost or whatever it was, that's all gone, that was just because of those drivers in that era. So lots of the drivers now have a lot to thank for those guys who lost their lives as well for the safety that is there for them today."

BM: "In terms of me and Johnny, we're from different generations in terms of being drivers ourselves, so we're never going to understand exactly what it was like for each other. I'm not going to be able to understand 100% what it was like to be a racing driver in Johnny's era and vice versa, but the fact we're able to do this sort of thing together we're able to say try and learn a bit."

JH: "The fundamentals are the same, but it's just the appearance is different, but the

actual core of the racing and driving is exactly the same."

BM: "Driving a car fast, the concept hasn't changed."

JH: "It's not changed whatsoever and that goes back to the '50s, '60s, '70s and all that, it's all the same, it's just the technology gets better and better and better."

BM: "Yeah there's going to be some things we agree on and some things that we disagree on but in general as drivers we kind of come to the same sort of roundabout opinion most of the time."

JH: "The only opinions you're going to get when you're going to disagree is probably a racing incident of some sort, that you [Monger] go 'yeah that's OK' then I might go 'no, no, no that's not because of x, y, z', and then it comes back to something else. So that's more what we are about."

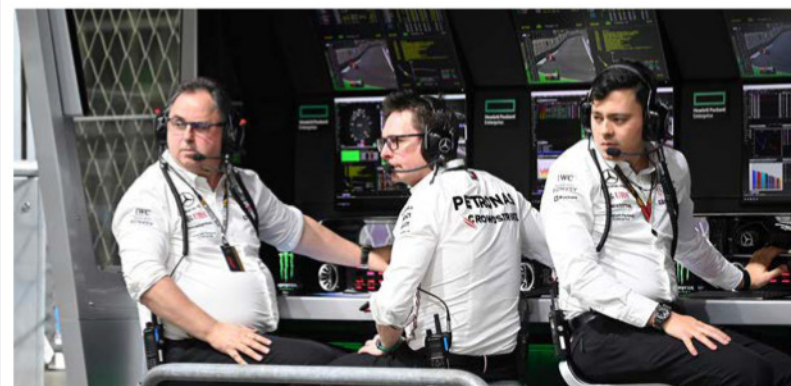
"We've got the driver element probably closer to heart. There's all the tech that we've got in Formula 1 and sometimes the tech's difficult to explain because even the teams don't want to tell you how the hell the tech works which is sometimes a bit frustrating. But the fundamentals of the

"No period of racing is better, they are just all different"

Johnny Herbert



Monger was inspired to start podcast after noticing F1 fan boom



Herbert reckons F1's strategy teams should have less influence



Monger has raced against many current F1 drivers

interest of the whole sport at the present time for us is great because we love the sport, but it's nice to talk about it at the same time, and whatever may be happening on the track. And of course not all fans are going to agree with us either, but that's all part of it, that's the fun part of it."

MN: So what kind of feedback have you been getting from fans?

JH: "Very negative [laughs]. Only negative! [Laughs] Billy's the star, I've taken it personally [Laughs]. No it's been very good, it's been getting more and more interest."

BM: "It's nice to get as much interaction with the fans as we've had so far because it's a new podcast and new idea. We weren't sure how much interest we would have but doing the 'Team Radio' episodes and having the fans asking the questions and dictating where we go with the podcast has been nice."

"And like I say because of the whole new Netflix sort of era fan, I feel like nowadays it's like [some fans think] if you don't know the ins and outs of Formula 1 then you're not a real Formula 1 fan. Well for me it's the opposite of that, that's what the whole idea of the podcast is, is if you are a new fan but you want to learn something new even if you think it's a stupid or silly question we're here to answer it and give our take on it so that hopefully, eventually, you will know a lot more about Formula 1 if you want to."

JH: "So it's just sharing our experiences I suppose and then trying to get them to engage with us which only makes it better because we're all talking to each other. Makes it easier, nicer."

Question: What do you think one best thing is about current F1 and what is the one thing you'd like to change?
Alexander Cameron
Via email

JH: "I like the tech, but some of the tech I [say] it doesn't need to be taking away the driver's skillset. So when you come down to strategy for example, when I was racing all we had was a board, we had a radio that crackled for 95% of the lap and worked just when you went past the pits and then the rest of it went [makes crackle noise] and it was gone."

"So you had to then think what was happening, you had your little discussion before [the race] but you had to then work out what was happening underneath you, and you sometimes made some calls and that now has become non-existent really because it's all dictated with the strategy of the team, which I totally understand, but from a human element point of view, or from a driver intelligence capacity point of view even that's sort of gone because, you [had] the race in Saudi where Sergio [Perez] wanted to go quicker, I've heard it before where they want to go quicker but they're told 'no no no, sit at this speed', 'but why's Max [Verstappen] getting more speed than I'm getting or allowed to do?', this that or the other."

"So it's all games that they play but I'd rather it be the drivers. I know [Stefano] Domenicali's come out actually and talked about Friday, [wanting to] get rid of Friday [practice]. Why? Because it's a data collection day and people find it boring, and that's part of this Netflix boomy sort of situation we're in at the moment, Drive to Survive. So to make it more interesting for me: you do your Friday [running], do what you want [that day]; Saturday, do what you want; Sunday, you've done everything to create the best car you possibly can, give it to the driver, let him deal with it."

"You still do your sit downs, still got your pitboard. But of course that just changes the whole strategy scenario because [current F1 teams] do it instantly, because it's just there on a computer."

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Festival win meant all talked about Herbert

FEATURE



Herbert brings his driver's eye view to his punditry

That's the problem with a board, when it's a lap too late [because you can only pit a lap after the pitboard signal] that would just change everything and that's where the driver's input will become more important. You'll still have the radio communication, although I would ban radios as well actually. So it's just to try, I'd enjoy it being more the driver actually making calls. Sometimes they're going to get it wrong, it's going to happen."

BM: "It'd definitely mix it up a bit."

JH: "But that's part of it, that's part of the jeopardy of it, the jeopardy is always a big human excitement part, so jeopardy would be something to put back in. So that was my bit I would change."

MN: [To Monger] So would you welcome that, only having a pitboard and no radio?

BM: "I definitely think there's a way to balance it out a bit better."

JH: "Just balance it out, that's all it is."

BM: "Yeah I don't think we're saying getting rid of radio in the grand scheme of things because it's useful in other ways but like Johnny said giving more ownership on where a driver takes his or her own race. If you're not sure if the hard or medium tyre's better not being given all that information to you on a plate."

JH: "Set at a pace, the delta times."

BM: "Yeah being told what speed to go to and stuff like that, that would spice it up a bit, you might go out and blow over your tyres too quick. As a driver you have the ability to feel what's going on underneath you and if you think you need to slow down to get yourself to the end of the race without having to do another pitstop then you can do that yourself, you can think on your feet."

"So it's one of those ones really. I do agree with what Johnny is saying fundamentally, it's just finding a way to implement it. It will be hard to implement with the teams because I think they're very happy how things are going for them right now where they can execute in their heads a perfect race with all the information, but we'll see."

JH: "And all I'm trying to do is if you've got Max there [indicates high], and if you've got Lewis [Hamilton] here [indicates high with his other hand], if you change all the strategy and the way that the teams dictate what happens in a race you're almost bringing the intelligent one, and that would be a Lewis and Max, down to the pack because they're not allowed to show that they're better than the rest."

"So if you do all this strategy thing the skilful one who can feel the tyre and adjust your speed to that tyre and knows when to push and when not to push, that goes out the window, because it's all based on the quickest way, whatever that may be. I just want to see the best drivers show us and wow us why they're the best. So that's what I'd change, just those little bits."

BM: "[The] best thing [about F1 is] I like the new regulations in the way they've gone because it's made the racing better. I feel like with the new regulation of cars they're able to follow closer than they were a few years ago where it was really difficult to overtake so that for me is a good thing in terms of we just want to see good racing, close racing. So the way they have navigated the rules so far in the last couple of years seems to have made the racing better so that's something I would stick with, that concept, if not try and build off the back of it. So there may be changes done in the future but the way they've gone with things has promoted better racing."

"And the budget cap as well, that lends itself to that as well, the fact that there is now a budget cap for a reason that naturally brings everyone together. It was

the first race of the season in Q1 it was like 1.2 seconds separating the whole field which is the closest it feels like it's ever been. So that for me is a positive."

JH: "The budget thing's good, the only thing and I know it's been brought up recently anyway which is where they're talking about changing, the problem is when the budget cap came in let's say for the likes of Ferrari they had the best sim, they had the best windtunnel, they had the best brake dyno tester compared to everybody else, but when they got frozen they had it but if you're a Williams you haven't got it, then you can't [build it]. Well you can, but you have to take it out your budget, well that's not fair."

"So there's got to be a little bit of give and take. I know the windtunnel is a bit of give and take anyway, the windtunnel is something you can do, but it's all the other elements. It's not one element, 'a windtunnel: oh it's going to make us win a race', it's not, it's everything else. It's the simulator and all the other bits that go with it, and that's where it's got to be evened up a little bit more, which has been discussed. We'll have to wait and see exactly where that goes."

Question: [To Monger] What has been the toughest part of your recovery?

Andy Hawkins

Via email

JH: "Got to be me!" [Laughs]

BM: "That time Johnny came and saw me in hospital! Scared me for life!"

JH: "Exactly!" [Laughs]

BM: "Toughest part of the recovery, it's always the initial part of dealing with what went on but then after that getting back to driving the car, racing going on and doing what I did in the world of motorsport. And just, I love driving, I love being a racing driver, just doing more of that helping me get over those things and getting back to normality and crack on with life."

MN sets the scene: In the 1985 Formula Ford Festival Herbert on his first qualifying lap crashed at Paddock Hill Bend. That left him having to do three laps in another session to qualify, then start his heat race from the back of the grid with a 10-second penalty. This didn't stop Herbert during the event charging through to win the final.

Question: Did you ever think you could win the '85 Festival from the back?

Paul Lawrence

Via email

JH: "Even after when I broke my legs, I always believed I could race again, and I always had a belief I could still win a race again, the World championship is probably not quite the same. But the Formula Ford Festival how I looked at it, so I crashed at Paddock, hadn't done my lap, qualified in the pre-'74s for three laps, so I got on the back on the grid, I think I was round here somewhere [points to Clark Curve]. I was such a long way back, there were thousands of cars in that race that weekend."

"So I looked at it and thought, so there's Damon Hill, there's Jonathan Bancroft, Paulo Carcasi, Mark Blundell, Bertrand Gachot, and I'm going to say there's five guys that I've got to beat, the rest of them I can beat easily. So my mentality was always well it doesn't matter where I start because I'm going to beat everybody else. And that's why in each heat and each quarter final, semi final I just went, I got further and further and further up the pack, and I ended up third on the grid for the final, because I was only racing five, I wasn't racing any of the others."

BM: "Lucky it wasn't like modern-day Formula 1 mate and you would have started where you qualified for the proper



Monger is aiming to be back racing before too long

race, at least you had a bit of time to work your way up the order.”

JH: “Exactly, so for me, mentally I was only racing five, because I always still thought it was possible. It’s only not possible when the chequered flag has been waved at someone else in front of you. So yes I always thought I could still do it. Because I was one of the quickest cars, I was one of the favourites going into it, yes I did that ridiculous mistake going into Paddock, but it was still possible in my head, and I proved it to be the case [laughs]. So yes, because I was only racing five.”

MN: So what impact did it have on your career subsequently, winning the Festival and winning that way?

JH: “Well it was good because, [even after] everything I’d done, it was basically Gachot and Blundell who were winning the RAC and the Esso [FF1600 championships], it was just really about them. But I was racing I say Paulo, Bancroft, Bertrand, Damon, Mark, Ruairi O’Coileain an Irishman. Basically I was racing in a Quest [chassis] and there was only really one of me against a field of Van Diemens, and I was only racing Van Diemens.”

“So I could be the second or third quite consistently, to win a race was really

really hard because it always seemed to be it was either Bertrand, Paulo or it was Damon or someone, they just always seemed to have enough cars to be able to always beat me. But here the track suited me and it suited the car I thought because it was quite a short wheelbase. So I [tried a] Van Diemen, I’d come from karting, I got in this thing and it was just horrible, horrible. Turned in all slow and then it’d slide, heavy and it’s horrible, I hated the things.”

“And then the Quest, short wheelbase, it was a bit twitchy and quick and suddenly, I still didn’t enjoy it but it came more alive [compared to] what I’d had before. So for this particular track the aerodynamics, because it had never been in a windtunnel where I think that was the very first Van Diemen, the RF85, that had been in a windtunnel, but the Quest had never been in one, so it wasn’t aerodynamically the fastest, it always created a massive slipstream for the rest of the pack, but that’s what we had.”

“But it suited here, so it was just the fundamentals, the comfort factor, was always good here. We were competitive through the year but we came to the right track at the right time of the year for the right race to be able to do it the manner that I did it, because I don’t think it had ever been done before in that way where someone was at the back on the grid in the heat with a 10-second penalty. I think it’s been done since a couple of times in a slightly different way.”

“But again I was very lucky because I always say the same word, there was an element of a wow factor because it was like ‘wow! He won because he was nowhere yesterday, nowhere.’ So that just made it more special. And then suddenly my name was on people’s lips, at the end of their tongue, suddenly I was a man to be talking about. So that was a fundamentally a very important win, or one of them.”

Question: [To Monger] What comes next

in your remarkable story?

Josh Falconbridge
Via email

BM: “Basically since Covid I’ve not done much racing myself mainly due to not having been able to get budget together and stuff like that. So from the racing side of things definitely still looking to get back behind the wheel at some point, just trying to find the right opportunity when that materialises really.”

“Still doing all the coverage with Channel 4 for the Formula 1 which I’m enjoying, it’s nice to be in and around the paddock, around a lot familiar faces that I raced against and being in that world because I grew up watching Formula 1 so now I’m a little bit of a different perspective but still enjoying that side of things. And yeah I’m sure there’ll be plenty more to add to what I’m doing but at the minute this, along with the podcast, that’s what I’m up to at the minute. Just keeping myself involved in motorsport which is what I know really because I’ve done it since I was a kid and it’s what I love.”

JH: “I’m too old, so racing is definitely not something that’s [in my plans].”

BM: “[You’re] Building a go kart though mate.”

JH: “I’m doing a kart, I’m not going to race the damn thing. I’m staying in testing, that’s it.”

BM: “Maybe a little kart race in between us two.”

JH: “That [kart] batters me. Physically I’m just going to be keeled, absolutely battered. I’m not ready.”

“And I’m enjoying this [the podcast], hopefully this is something that will grow and do more and more things with it, get more and more people coming in to be interviewed and stuff like that. That would be very enjoyable to get this more popular, which I’m sure it will become that way, mainly because of me [laughs].”

BM: “That’s what he reckons, fans all over the world!” ■



The pair enjoyed their day at Brands and saw some familiar faces



Monger hopes the podcast will appeal to F1 fans new and old

“I’d like drivers to make the strategy calls”

Johnny Herbert

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Our 12-page special breaks down the barriers to motorsport competition, **starts p15**

Brackley-based team plots evolution to regain lost ground to Red Bull and Ferrari

MERCEDES AIMS TO BOUNCE BACK BY STICKING TO DESIGN PRINCIPLES



Wraps came off the new Mercedes W14 racer

By Matt James

Mercedes F1 bosses say the team's new W14 design has ironed out the flaws from its 2022 challenger and will give drivers Lewis Hamilton and George Russell the chance to fight for grand prix wins. The team slipped to third in the constructors' chase last year after eight straight constructors' titles. The 2022 W13 was prone to bouncing in the early part of the campaign but work by engineers ironed out the phenomenon by the end of the campaign. Now the new W14 has taken design philosophies from the previous machine and team chiefs say it will be a step forward. Technical director Mike Elliott said: "At times last year, we were questioning ourselves and saying: 'Do we have to tear it all up and start again?' But you know if you do that, you are going to go backwards. Although we had problems last year, we know there is a lot of goodness in the car. "We've looked at the problems we had last year and how best to ensure we solved them."

Full story, page 4



Lewis Hamilton

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT
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PREVIEW

**STARS TO
SHINE AT
RACE RETRO**

We look ahead to the historic showpiece, p14



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RACING REPORTS

Photos: Steve Jones

DONINGTON PARK: MSVR BY STEVE WHITFIELD

APRIL 1-2



Lay picked up where he left off in Radicals



Romanek (73) and Middlehurst (2, partially hidden) shared the FF1600 wins



Colbourne (28) beat Hill (51) in a thrilling Production GTi drag race to line

LAY GETS RADICAL CHALLENGE DEFENCE OFF TO PERFECT START AT DONINGTON PARK

Reigning champion James Lay scored a hat-trick of wins at the Radical SR3 Cup opener during MotorSport Vision's meeting at Donington Park. But he was pushed hard by SR1 champion Daryl DeLeon, who was making his SR3 debut. Race one was red-flagged and restarted after oil was deposited at Redgate, while the safety car was deployed late on to retrieve Ben Stone's car from the gravel. Lay coped with the two restarts as well as pressure from DeLeon to triumph by 0.382 seconds. Things were made easier for him in race two when DeLeon spun, with Ben Caisley coming home six seconds behind and DeLeon recovering to third. The final pitstop race was a hugely chaotic affair, with a multi-car

collision on the first lap at Redgate leading to a red flag, then a further tangle between Abdelmajeed Khateeb and Jason Rishover at the restart caused the first of two safety car periods. DeLeon led briefly after passing Lay on the outside of Old Hairpin, but Lay moved back ahead during the pitstop phase to seal his third triumph after a further red flag halted proceedings early. Chris Middlehurst won the opening United Formula Ford race before in the sequel mechanical woes for Middlehurst handed victory to Lucas Romanek. Back at the wheel of his rebuilt Van Diemen, which was largely destroyed in a Team Dolan factory fire last year, the 2021 BRSCC National FF1600 champion Middlehurst climbed from fourth on the grid to snatch the lead from

polesitter Romanek in race one and took advantage of a squabble behind to pull clear. Ammonite Motorsport's Elliott Budzinski closed in on Middlehurst late on but an early chequered flag halted his bid for victory. A suspension and driveshaft failure pitched Middlehurst's car out of the lead of race two allowing Romanek to take a comfortable win, with Budzinski again finishing second. One of the most thrilling contests came in the opening Production GTi race, with James Colbourne beating Simon Hill in a drag race to the line after Hill locked-up before the final corner. Ryan Sayer triumphed in the sequel ahead of Spencer Beale. Tom Andrew and Jonathan Lovell shared the spoils after close battles in the two Porsche Club Boxster

Cup contests. The lead changed between the pair in race one before a late mistake forced Lovell to settle for second. Lovell built a 4.5s advantage in race two while Andrew was left to fight his way past Ashley White, and prevailed despite Andrew closing the gap late on. Harry Mailer won the first of the Porsche Club Championship races, passing defending champion Peter Morris exiting Old Hairpin after a heavy crash between Mark McAleer and Bill Caley caused a restart. Steve Wood passed Mailer at Coppice to win race two as early leader Morris faded to third with tyre issues. Wayne Marrs scored a comfortable brace of victories in the inaugural round of the Bell Sport Challenge Series at the wheel of his Ferrari 488.

RACE WINNERS			
GT Cup		Race 2: Steve Wood (Porsche 996)	
Race 1: Hugo Cook (Audi R8 GT3 EVO2); Race 2: Morgan Tillbrook/Marcus Clutton (McLaren 720s GT3); Races 3 & 4: James Wallis (Mercedes AMG GT3)		Z Cars & Production GTi	
		Race 1: James Colbourne (VW Golf GTi); Race 2: Ryan Sayer (VW Golf GTi)	
United Formula Ford		Radical Cup	
Race 1: Chris Middlehurst (Van Diemen L10); Race 2: Lucas Romanek (Van Diemen JL13)		Races 1, 2 & 3: James Lay (Radical SR3)	
Porsche Club Boxster Cup		Focus Cup	
Race 1: Tom Andrew; Race 2: Jonathan Lovell		Race 1: Sean Reynolds; Race 2: Simon Watts	
Porsche Club Championship		Bell Sport Challenge	
Race 1: Harry Mailer (Porsche Cayman);		Races 1 & 2: Wayne Marrs (Ferrari 488)	

GT CUP



Wallis (50) gets by reigning British GT champ Loggie (76)

Mercedes man Wallis bounces back in GT Cup

James Wallis bounced back from mechanical woes to take a double victory in a Drivetac powered by Track Focused Mercedes AMG GT3 at the GT Cup's opener at Donington Park. Wallis had to settle for second behind Hugo Cook's Audi R8 GT3 during Saturday's sprint race that was disrupted by a bizarre collision between British GT champion Ian Loggie and

Lucky Khera as Loggie appeared to head for the pitlane. A heavy crash into the pitwall for reigning GT Cup champion Simon Orange caused the subsequent pitstop race to be red-flagged, with Wallis also retiring after a wheelnut issue. Marcus Clutton won the restarted contest after taking over the McLaren 720S GT3 from Morgan Tillbrook, while Sennan Fielding produced a late charge to seal second in the Mercedes he shared with Grahame Tilley, placing ahead of Euan Hankey and Khera's McLaren. Wallis took advantage of lapped traffic at Coppice in Sunday's sprint to move alongside early leader Casper Stevenson – taking over driving duties from Loggie – before completing the move into the

chicane and then taking victory ahead of Stevenson and Khera. Tillbrook led the final pitstop race from pole before Wallis moved ahead into Redgate early on. His advantage grew after the mandatory pitstop due to a lack of success penalties – a legacy of his retirement in Saturday's second race – and he eventually cruised home over 26 seconds clear of second-placed Clutton.

RACING REPORTS

Photos: Gary Hawkins

BRANDS HATCH: MSVR BY GRAHAM KEILLOH

APRIL 1-2



Watkins (63) overcame hurdles for double win



Power from the elegant Shelby helped Nigel Winchester to star at Brands

WATKINS LEADS THE WINNERS AT BRANDS

MG Car Club and Equipe Classic Racing got their seasons underway with an intense weekend of Brands Hatch Indy circuit dicing among an eclectic line-up of cars.

Stephen Watkins won both Midget and Sprite races, but neither win was straightforward despite him being one of only two from top-level Class A. His particular bugbear was that pursuing Class E cars warmed their tyres quicker.

In race one Richard Bridge – now in a Class E Austin Healey Sebring Sprite – chased Watkins closely.

Bridge didn’t take part in race two due to a cracked cylinder head sustained on the way back to the paddock after the first race.

Watkins looked in control of that second contest, though a red flag left a five-minute sprint to the flag that Class E’s Pippa Cow led before Watkins re-established command.

MG Owners’ Club racer Steve

McDermid was shaking down his brand-new MG ZR 190, and in it took a crushing race-one MG Cup win. He led again in race two before retiring after contact with pursuing Ashley Woodward. The pair disagreed on how the contact was initiated: Woodward said McDermid spun in front of him; McDermid said Woodward’s contact caused the spin.

Woodward, impeded by suspension damage from the clash, was later passed for victory by Strictly Come Dancing singer Lance Ellington returning to Rover Tomcat racing after a quarter century away.

Similarly Baynton Jones Historic Motorsport boss Charles Jones driving his MG L Magna for the first time in four years won both pre-War Triple-M races.

Graham Ross won both MG Trophy races, though in race two was chased hard by Doug Cole who missed race one as a flat battery left him

stranded in the collecting area.

Neil Fowler took two dominant BCV8 wins, despite starting both from the back after his fire extinguisher discharged before qualifying. He also had enough of an advantage to overcome a race-one five-second penalty for passing before the line at a safety car restart.

In the Equipe races, Nigel Winchester charged to win the opening Pre ’63/’50s race in his Shelby 260, after wet qualifying circumspection meant he started low down. He looked set to double up in race two, his straightline power helping resist pursuers, but got a five-second track-limits penalty that let Nick Finburgh’s nimble Lola triumph.

Andrew Wenman – a late stand-in for unwell father David – looked set to win the opening Equipe 70s race decisively in his Morgan, but a spin at Surtees meant he dropped behind Stephen Winter’s Porsche 911.

Wenman avoided error to win race two.

Tom Smith won the first Equipe GTS race in his MG B Roadster, taking the lead early then keeping a scrapping pack behind at arm’s length throughout.

Poleman Oliver Pratt had a poor get-go in his Morgan Plus 4, dropping to mid-pack. He climbed back to second place and finished only 2.5 seconds shy of Smith.

Pratt made proper amends in race two by winning, claiming a lead he didn’t lose from Smith after a restart that followed a lap-five pitwall crash for David Alexander’s Lotus Elite.

Chris Beighton’s Sunbeam Tiger, set to race at Le Mans Classic this year, led all of the first Equipe Libre race. He looked likely to repeat this in race two but first lost the lead with a Clearways spin, and then having retaken first place the Sunbeam’s oil dipstick hose failed, resulting in its retirement. Gerard Buggy’s Lotus Elan prevailed.

RACE WINNERS

MGCC MG Trophy
Races 1 & 2: Graham Ross (MG ZR 190)

MGCC MG Cup
Race 1: Steve McDermid (MG ZR 190);
Race 2: Lance Ellington (Rover 220 Turbo)

MGCC Midget & Sprite Challenge
Races 1 & 2: Stephen Watkins (MG Midget)

MGCC Triple-M Racing Challenge
Races 1 & 2: Charles Jones (MG L Magna)

MGCC BCV8 championship
Races 1 & 2: Neil Fowler (MG B GT)

Equipe GTS
Race 1: Tom Smith (MG B Roadster);
Race 2: Oliver Pratt (Morgan Plus 4)

Equipe 70s
Race 1: Stephen Winter (Porsche 911 2.8RSR);
Race 2: Andrew Wenman (Morgan Plus)

Equipe Pre 63 / 50s
Race 1: Nigel Winchester (Shelby 260);
Race 2: Nick Finburgh (Lola Mk 1)

Equipe Libre
Race 1: Chris Beighton (Sunbeam Tiger);
Race 2: Gerard Buggy (Lotus Elan)

OULTON PARK: BARC BY STEPHEN MOSLEY

APRIL 1

UNFORTUNATE END TO FINE CATERHAM RACING DAY

Last Saturday the various Caterham series, now under the auspices of the British Automobile Racing Club, made their return to the track in the marque’s 2023 season opener at Oulton Park.

Caterham’s continued active support, including a well-appointed hospitality marquee, added to the air of this being a friendly grassroots racing community. Various changes made to the regulations as well as a move to two or three 20-minute races per class promised excitement but also somewhat

a step into the unknown.

The Caterham Seven 270R championship was given the honour of opening proceedings with Charlie Lower claiming pole from Rrutuj Patki. As the lights went out Alex Vincent struggled to get away from fifth spot and, just to compound his misery, also received one of the first 10-second penalties – mainly given for starting out of position – that were a regular occurrence in the meeting.

Exciting racing through the field followed with constant changes of position; multiple leaders within

a single lap was not uncommon along with improbable overtaking moves and numerous drivers entering braking zones side by side.

Freddie Chiddicks took the chequered flag first in the 270R opener but was demoted for a transgression at the start. Lower inherited the win with Matt Larby taking second and Patki third. Chiddicks made up for it somewhat by taking the other two 270R victories.

It seemed likely that we had seen the best race first but in fact the next one, for the Caterham Seven

310Rs, showed that the 270Rs had simply established the pattern for the day. It continued with the Caterham Sevens. The closest win came with Caterham Roadsport’s first outing, Lyonel Tollemache taking victory by a mere 0.006s from Ben Timmons.

As the day progressed incidents were few and primarily limited to broken bodywork. We had been treated to consistently close battles, mostly in brilliant sunshine, but with clouds gathering in the late afternoon events took a dramatic turn.

In what was scheduled to be the

penultimate race of the day, 310R pair Roger Gaunt and Duncan Cooke had heavy accidents, serious enough to end the meeting – with it cancelling the final Seven championship race – and call out the air ambulance.

In the most unfortunate of ways we were reminded once more of the debt we owe to the marshals and emergency workers who make it possible for us to go racing.

There had been no official update on the matter when Motorsport News went to press on Monday, though we understand the drivers’ injuries were light, thankfully.

RACE WINNERS

Caterham Seven 270R
Race 1: Charlie Lower;
Races 2 & 3: Freddie Chiddicks

Caterham Seven 310R
Races 1, 2 & 3: Lars Alexander Hoffman

Caterham Seven
Races 1 & 2: Lewis Thompson

Caterham Roadsport
Race 1: Lyonel Tollemache;
Race 2: Ben Timmons

RALLY REPORTS

Photos: Kevin Money

ALAN HEALY STAGES: CIRCUIT RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP BY PETER SCHERER

APRIL 2



Mark Kelly won a Cadwell thriller



John Griffiths bagged another strong result to cap CRC title

KELLY RETURNS TO WINNING FORM IN CADWELL CIRCUIT RALLY ENCOUNTER

It was a battle of the champions at Cadwell Park in the penultimate round of the Motorsport News-supported Circuit Rally Championship, as newly crowned champions John Griffiths and Emma Morrison duelled with 2021-22 title winners Mark Kelly and Neil Colman with the latter pair asserting their prowess with a victory.

It was Griffiths who took the early initiative, as his Ford Fiesta R5 headed Kelly's Skoda Fabia R5 by two seconds on the opening stage, before a five-second gap to third-placed Ollie O'Donovan/Ashleigh Morris (Hyundai i20 R5).

Paul Murro/Callum Cross (Fiesta R5) were in fourth, with just one second splitting Michael Igoe/Will Atkins (Fiesta Rally2) and Tony Robinson/Mark Jones (Skoda Fabia R5) in the duel for fifth. Igoe had lost time though after stalling at a hairpin.

It was Kelly's turn to lose out on stage two. "I grabbed second gear instead of the handbrake," he said, after losing another seven seconds to Griffiths. Kelly's mistake had allowed both O'Donovan and Murro to close the gap, as all three were covered by just three

seconds, with Igoe edging closer too, having completed the stage only one second slower than Griffiths.

The lead was back down to six seconds when Kelly was quickest on stage three, but both O'Donovan and Murro held station despite losing time to the lead pair. Igoe's challenge was over, though, when he hit a gatepost with his rear wheel when in the assembly area section. This moved Roger Duckworth/Marc Fowler (Fiesta R5) to fifth, as Robinson retained sixth.

Kelly was quickest again on the next stage and although Griffiths managed to hold on to his lead the gap was just one second, but behind the order had become fairly settled. "I had been on the grass briefly as the tyres took quite a while to come in," said Griffiths.

O'Donovan, Murro, Duckworth and Robinson all held station in the top six, with Kieran Hankin/James Swallow (Peugeot 208 T16 R5) consolidating seventh over Jack Ives/David Read (Citroen DS3 R5 Evo) and the leading two-wheel-drive cars of Greg Inglis/Charley Sayer-Payne and James Garner/Jack Cuttill in their respective Lotus Exige and Darrian GTR T90. "I'm having a

great time," said O'Donovan.

The one-second deficit became a two-second lead advantage after five stages, with Kelly fastest overall again. But Murro's hold on fourth had reduced too as Duckworth closed in. Hankin ousted Robinson from sixth, but, despite a big backwards moment on the grass, Ives still managed to retain eighth and only lost a second to Inglis.

Fastest again on both stages six and seven left Kelly to start the final pair of stages with a seven-second lead. "I'm still pushing hard as this championship is so competitive," said Kelly. "I'm just staying as close as I can to Mark in case something happens," Griffiths replied.

On the penultimate stage Griffiths managed to pull one second back, before tying with Kelly on the final test. So the final winning margin was six seconds in Kelly's favour, with O'Donovan completing the podium, a further 56s back.

Having missed the last few rounds Murro was soon back on the pace and held fourth place all day. "We made a few later changes to the car and it seemed to improve my pace," he explained.

While Duckworth managed to

consolidate fifth, the duel for sixth went down to the wire. Hankin started the last stage two seconds up on Robinson, but roles were reversed and Robinson finally sealed it by 17s. Ives had managed to consolidate eighth too. "I haven't done many rallies in this car, so I'm still learning but delighted to be getting more consistency now," he said.

Inglis had managed to stay in the top 10, despite having problems. "The car kept cutting out on me under load, but it did restart. It has happened before and I think it might be oil pressure," he said after settling in ninth.

Martin Hodgson/Tony Jones (Ford Escort Mk2) had been ninth after the first two stages, but lost time on stage three with a lack of lock at a hairpin. They were back in the top 10 after stage five and after seven were tied with Inglis. But the Lotus driver managed to edge clear again as Hodgson settled in 10th.

Alasdair Stables and Neil Jones (Vauxhall Chevette HSR) were briefly in the top 10 too but came home 11th comfortably clear of the duelling Mitsubishis of Paul Walker/Liam Whiteley and Steve Hill/Hal Ridge.

RESULTS				
Circuit Rally Championship, round 7				
POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME	
1	Mark Kelly/Neil Colman	Skoda Fabia R5	43m57s	
2	John Griffiths/Emma Morrison	Ford Fiesta R5	+06s	
3	Ollie O'Donovan/Ashleigh Morris	Hyundai i20 R5	+1m02s	
4	Paul Murro/Callum Cross	Ford Fiesta R5	+1m23s	
5	Roger Duckworth/Marc Fowler	Ford Fiesta R5	+1m29s	
6	Tony Robinson/Mark Jones	Skoda Fabia R5	+2m19s	
7	Kieran Hankin/James Swallow	Peugeot 208 T16 R5	+2m36s	
8	Jack Ives/David Read	Citroen DS3 R5 Evo	+3m28s	
9	Greg Inglis/Charley Sayer-Payne	Lotus Exige	+3m37s	
10	Martin Hodgson/Tony Jones	Ford Escort	+3m42s	

Class winners: Oliver Howard/Simon Howard (Nissan Micra); Daniel Poole/Irvine Holtam (Vauxhall Corsa); Sam Cox/Jack Cox (Renault Clio Cup); Inglis/Sayer-Payne; Paul Walker/Liam Whiteley (Mitsubishi Lancer E9).



Irishman Ollie O'Donovan completed overall podium

CLASSES



Oliver and Simon Howard won Class 1 in their Micra

It's Howards' Way for Class 1 victory as the category battlers lap up the twisty challenge

Oliver and Simon Howard (Nissan Micra) comfortably led Class 1 all day. Ian Barnes and Jason Cutter (Ford Ka) were in second place throughout, but a puncture on stage seven robbed James and David Palmer-Smith (Vauxhall Corsa) of third, promoting Maz Miller/Iain Davidson (Micra).

The Mazda MX-5 of Paul

Sheard/Colin Stephens was the early Class 2 leader but had to give best to the duelling Corsas of Daniel Poole/Irvine Holtam and Joseph Duffy/Aaron Brimblecombe (Lotus Elise).

After a number of changes for the lead, Poole finally made it stick from stage six. But at the end he only took the class on a tie break, as they were dead level, with Sheard retaining third.

Sam and Jack Cox (Renault Clio) led Class 3 all day, but early rivals Will Clarke and Nick Roberts retired their Clio on stage two. Two stages later Steve Dolman and Julia Perry were out when their Mazda MX-5 broke its throttle cable. The

Mazdas of Paul Gorge/Harriet Worth and Peter Taylor/Charlotte Wainwright crashed out too, leaving Matthew Thompson/Howard Pridmore (BMW Compact) to pip Lee Ryan/Paul Webster (Ford Escort) for second on the final stage. Greg Inglis and Martin Hodgson shared Class 4 top spot after seven stages, before Inglis edged clear. Stephen Sawley (Escort) crashed out on stage four and James Garner's Darrian went out two stages later, leaving Alasdair Stables to take third. In class 5 it was a day-long duel between Paul Walker and Steve Hill's Mitsubishis. Both had problems and Walker won by just one second.

RALLY REPORTS

Photos: Chicane Media, Martin Walsh

NORTH YORKSHIRE CLASSIC: YORK MOTOR CLUB BY BRIAN GOFF

APRIL 2



Haygarth nursed his Opel to victory



The Proctors, Ali and Lynsey, took second overall in their nimble Peugeot 205GTi

HAYGARTH KEEPS ENGINE GOING TO TAKE THE GLORY

John Haygarth kept his fingers crossed hoping the engine would hold out in his Opel Kadett, and it only just did as he won the North Yorkshire Classic Rally.

Co-driven by Martin Taylor, they were chased all the way by the husband-and-wife team of Ali and Lynsey Procter in their Peugeot 205GTi that finished in second position by the slim margin of 19 seconds.

The new clerk of the course, Ian Canavan promised a different but not difficult rally and he certainly

delivered on this. Five regularities and 12 special tests, mostly airfield based, all revolving around the market town of Easingwold, proved challenging to crews on the second round of the MN HRCR Clubmans Rally Championship.

Haygarth pushed his luck with the engine knocking after the morning tests. "Looks like this could be over soon," he said, but fastest times in the afternoon over Spaunton and consistent regularity times kept him in the running.

Regularity 1 proved a disaster for top seeds Leigh Powley and Brian Goff in their Toyota Corolla with a puncture mid reg dropping them way down the leaderboard. Another crew to have a problem in the morning was John King and Nick Bloxham who retired their Toyota MR2 with head gasket failure.

Results at lunch showed Haygarth in the lead with the Proctors in second. Gavin Rogers and Suze Endean were lying third but overheating problems in their Reliant Scimitar slowed

them down in the afternoon.

The afternoon tests over East Moor and Tholthorpe proved decisive with many crews getting wrong tests including Jon Dunning and Henry Carr. "Not so keen on quarry tests," said Dunning. Paul O'Kane and Ian Tullie were also having problems and resorted to push start their Peugeot 205 mid-test when it stalled. Ali and Lynsey Procter had a wrong test as did Powley/Goff, adding to their frustration.

The final regularity was the traditional sting in the tail. The

Proctors nailed this hoping it would elevate them to the lead. Haygarth/Taylor dropped time but just kept the lead while Dunning/Carr moved up to third and the father-and-son crew of Nick and Dan Darkin in their Mazda MX-5 finished a creditable fourth. Ken and Sarah Binstead finished fifth in their MGB and were more than happy after wrong slotting in the morning. "Just happy to get to the finish," said Ken. Sixth overall was James Griffiths and James Howell in their Mini 1275GT.

First expert crew were Angus McQueen and Mike Cochrane in their BMW 323i and heading the novices were Steve Sly and Nick Green in their MGB GT.

Results
Organisers: York Motor Club **When:** April 2
Where: Easingwold, North Yorkshire
Championship: HRCR/MN Clubmans Starters: 88
1 John Haygarth/Martin Taylor (Opel Kadett) 18m12s; 2 Ali Procter/Lynsey Procter (Peugeot 205GTi) +19s; 3 Jon Dunning/Henry Carr (Ford Escort RS2000); 4 Dan Darkin/Nick Darkin (Mazda MX-5); 5 Ken Binstead/Sarah Binstead (MGB); 6 James Griffiths/James Howell (Mini 1275GT); 7 Angus McQueen/Mike Cochrane (BMW 323i); 8 Paul O'Kane/Ian Tullie (VW Golf GTi); 9 Leigh Powley/Brian Goff (Toyota Corolla); 10 Gavin Rogers/Suze Endean (Reliant Scimitar). **Class winners:** McQueen/Cochrane; Steve Sly/Nick Green (MGB GT).

KERRY STAGES: KERRY MOTOR CLUB BY MARTIN WALSH

APRIL 2

MOFFETT TURNS THE TABLES TO WIN

The second Irish national rally championship encounter between Josh Moffett (Hyundai i20 R5) and Callum Devine (VW Polo GTi R5) was a role reversal of their first with Moffett winning the Circuit of Kerry Stages.

Moffett was 6.5 seconds ahead of Devine, who posted the best time on the Powerstage to claim an extra championship point. Moffett led throughout with Devine his constant pursuer, the gap never more than 10s prior to the final stage. Donegal's Kevin Gallagher (Darrian T90 GTR) completed the top three, 55s further behind.

Initially Devine lacked confidence but having softened

the suspension, his second loop was better, breaking Moffett's domination of fastest stage times on SS5.

Daniel Barry (Skoda Fabia R5) held third for the first two stages but had a moment on each and on the next. A flying Gallagher slotted his Darrian into third ahead of Barry, who was followed by the Escort of another Donegal driver, Mark Alcorn (Escort), who clipped a bank and bent a brake disc.

Darren Gass never really got into the groove and retired his Citroen C3 after SS6 where it lost third gear. Much earlier Declan Boyle, trying his luck with a similar car, lost power steering oil on SS1 and on SS2 heat from

the manifold burnt some wires and he lost power and retired.

Although there were no changes to the top five, Alcorn spun on SS8 and slapped a bank on SS9. Behind, Richard Moffett (Starlet) had a steady run to sixth while Daniel Cronin (seventh) made an error at a chicane on SS3 and on SS6 lost over 30s when he slid his Polo into a drain. Andrew Purcell (Skoda Fabia R5) spent most of the day building confidence after a quick exit on the previous round; Chris O'Callaghan's tyre choice on the first loop could have been better as Michael Boyle managed to get his clutch-slipping VW Polo to the finish line in 10th spot.

Results
Organiser: Kerry Motor Club. **When:** April 2. **Where:** Tralee Co. Kerry. **Championships:** Irish National Rally

Championship; West Coast Rally Championship; Kingdom of Kerry Rally Championship. **Starters:** 150. 1 Josh Moffett/Keith Moriarty (Hyundai i20 R5) 46m22s; 2 Callum Devine/Noel O'Sullivan (VW Polo GTi R5) +6.5s; 3 Kevin Gallagher/Ryan Moore (Darrian T90 GTR); 4 Daniel Barry/Lorcan Moore (Skoda Fabia R5); 5 Mark Alcorn/Dominic McAlaney (Ford Escort); 6 Richard Moffett/Darragh Kelly (Toyota Starlet); 7 Daniel Cronin/Donnchadh Burke (VW Polo GTi R5); 8 Andrew Purcell/Shane Buckley (Skoda Fabia R5); 9 Chris O'Callaghan/Dale McGettigan (Ford Escort); 10 Michael Boyle/Dermot McCafferty (VW Polo GTi R5). **Class winners:** Jack Brennan/John McGrath (Renault Clio Rally5); Ryan McHugh/Dedan Boyle (Ford Fiesta Rally4); Paul Croke/Liam Howlett (Honda Civic); Tomas O'Rourke/Tomas Scallan (Mitsubishi Lancer E8); Barry/Moore; Steve Wood/Kenny Hull (Ford Fiesta WRC); Lloyd Hutchinson/Willie Fitzpatrick (Austin Mini Cooper S); P.J. O'Dowd/Patrick Lawlor (Talbot Sunbeam); Darren Young/Sean Walsh (Honda Civic); Mark Murphy/Damien Fleming (Toyota Starlet); Sean Moynihan/Padraig O'Donovan (Ford Escort); John Warren/Ruthann O'Connor (Toyota Corolla); Alcorn/McAlaney; Brian Cormiskey/Dedan Campbell (Subaru Impreza); Michael Carbin/Dean O'Sullivan (Mitsubishi Lancer E8); Eoghan Fogarty/Cian Fogarty (Toyota Corolla); Paul McDewitt/Ray Fitzpatrick (Ford Escort); Ian Davies/Gwynfor Jones (BMW M3); Jamie O'Rourke/Patrick Brisbane (Honda Civic).



Josh Moffett had to withstand huge pressure to win

TOUR OF CAERWENT: FORRESTER'S CAR CLUB BY SIMON GRONOW

APRIL 2

WILLETT AND DAVIES MAKE IT A PERFECT SEVEN DESPITE TECHNICAL TRAUMAS

After overcoming a number of technical issues, Dave Willett/John Davies won the Tour of Caerwent for the seventh time in their Ford Escort Mk2. However, it was no easy victory as they were embroiled in a day-long battle with Malcolm and Rhys Jones, who had a superb debut outing in their Darrian T90 GTR.

Willett set fastest time on the first stage as Jones, who has previously competed in a Peugeot 207, dropped time on the

final corner after following a rival car for some time. The roles were reversed on SS2, when a loose filler cap slowed Willett and Jones set his first fastest time.

Despite electrical gremlins and gearshift issues, Willett was fastest on the third and fifth stages to open up a seven-second lead, while Jones, who had been fastest on the fourth test, continued to catch cars on every stage.

On the final stage of the day,

Jones was fastest again but Willett held on to complete the win by a mere five seconds.

Things were more straightforward for Chris Simmons, who finished third in another Darrian T90 GTR after a faultless run. Making his result even more impressive was that co-driver Lucie Gutteridge was competing on her first event.

Sean and Colin Quigley had a good run to fourth in their Ford Fiesta R5, finishing ahead of

Oliver Davies/Ben Innes in a Ford Escort. Behind them, Neil Weaver/Fiona Crump (Opel Corsa) just beat Darrian pair Richard Merriman/Kath Curzon to sixth, with both crews winning their respective classes.

Casualties included Bob Fowden whose Subaru had gearbox problems, Darrell Taylor whose Ford Fiesta R5 suffered a puncture, and Thomas Cooper who dropped from second place when his Mitsubishi Lancer E9

developed engine problems.

Jack Birch/Mike Jode led the Junior F1000 contenders home in their Nissan Micra.

Results
Organisers: Forresters Car Club **When:** April 2
Where: MOD Caerwent Training Area
Championships: Welsh National Tarmacadam Championship; CMSG Stage Rally Championship; Rally Challenge; Junior F1000 Championship **Stages:** 6 **Starters:** 86
1 Dave Willett/John Davies (Ford Escort Mk2) 1h01m52s; 2 Malcolm Jones/Rhys Jones (Darrian T90 GTR) +5s; 3 Chris Simmons/Lucie Gutteridge (Darrian T90 GTR); 4 Sean Quigley/Colin Quigley (Ford Fiesta R5); 5 Oliver Davies/

Ben Innes (Ford Escort Mk2); 6 Neil Weaver/Fiona Crump (Opel Corsa); 7 Richard Merriman/Kath Curzon (Darrian T90); 8 Phil Turner/Simon Anthony (Skoda Fabia); 9 James Munden/Dale Lovegrove (Ford Escort Mk2); 10 Kev Car/Chris Phippen (Ford Escort RS). **Class winners:** Barri Wilmot/Andrew Lees (Vauxhall Nova); Weaver/Crump; Merriman/Curzon; Leighton Smith/Karen Phelps (Peugeot 205 GTi); Jones/Jones; Quigley/Quigley; Sean Jones/Phil Jones (Vauxhall Astra); Martin Rossiter/Ian Davis (Ford Escort RS 1800). **Junior F1000:** 1 Jack Birch/Mike Jode (Nissan Micra) 1h17m05s; 2 Charlie Mathewson/Ian Bass (Peugeot 107) +28s; 3 Rhys Jones/Alan Gilbert (Citroen C1); 4 Oliver Waggett/Callum Young (Citroen C1); 5 Riley Chester/Lucy Wilding (Nissan Micra); 6 Florence Butler/John Goff (Citroen C1).

COLUMNIST

CALLUM VOISIN



The 17-year-old rising star is putting his learning to use for his second GB3 season

Photos: Jakob Ebrey



Voisin took victory three times in his debut year



Testing is going well

I am feeling good and quite confident about the new GB3 season. Testing has been quite going quite well and, as I am returning to the GB3 championship with Rodin Carlin for a second season, I know the team, I know the tracks and I know the car, so everything is coming into place. It's going quite smoothly and I'm really looking forward to round one this weekend at Oulton Park.

Last season, my debut campaign in GB3, was crazy. It was never really predictable, and sometimes we were a little bit off, which I guess was kind of expected with me not having much experience. But then sometimes, especially towards the end of the year, we were probably the quickest car on track.

I really enjoyed it. It was my first year in single-seaters – I'd previously driven in Ginetta Juniors and karting – and I don't think it really could have gone much better. I finished fourth in the table, and was only 4.5 points off third. It was a nice introduction into this new chapter in my career and I just want to continue it this year.

I've always wanted to keep moving on in my career and as a driver you always want new challenges. However I came to a realisation that it was probably better for this season to stay in GB3, coming into it as a more experienced driver, whereas in the last few years I've always been the new kid on the block and not knowing what to expect. Coming in as an experienced driver, I know what to do to win this. I won three races last year, so I already

know what's going on and how it works.

If I want to carry on this path to hopefully Formula 1 one day, you want to stay in European competition or in the UK. There were other options, such as America, which were good and realistic but, rationally, if you want to try and get to F1 this is the right path.

As I said, for the whole of my career I've always been the new guy, and didn't really know what to expect, but this year everything's in the right place. That comes with greater expectations, being a second-year driver, and especially by having a good first year in the series. But I'm looking forward to it, and it should be a good one.

I have also just been named as a British Racing Drivers' Club SuperStar, which is the BRDC's elite young driver programme, and it is a huge honour. I was a BRDC Rising Star, the club's other young driver programme, and I only joined that in September last year, so

I'd only been one for six months. It was a bit of a surprise when I found out I was a SuperStar, as I thought it was already settled with only recently being a Rising Star, so being a SuperStar was probably going to be unrealistic.

I'm looking forward to getting to work with BRDC SuperStars director Andy Meyrick and all the other BRDC members and learning from their wealth of knowledge as well as representing the BRDC SuperStars when I race.

It's a great opportunity and to be chosen for such an elite group of young and up-and-coming drivers is really something quite special. I had a chat with Andy then met him a few days later, where he told me about how BRDC SuperStars works, and how it's the in-between part from your junior career to trying to become a professional racing driver. There are so many BRDC members who are rich in experience and who know what to do in different cars, so with me only having driven single-seaters so far it'll definitely help in the future.

The other drivers on the programme have lots of knowledge too. We were talking about it over lunch on our SuperStars launch day, chatting about Formula 3, GB3, how it works, what's going on, and it's really nice to get an insight from someone who is doing that series right now without politics or anything like that. It's just literally what they think of the series and as a driver who aspires to be on that grid hopefully in the next couple of years. That's really helpful. You get some interesting stories, so it's already been very helpful.



Voisin wants to stay on the path to Formula 1

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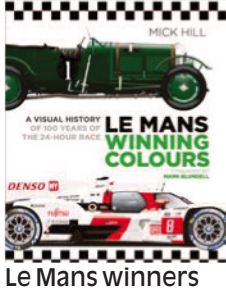
BOOK REVIEW

Le Mans Winning Colours

By Mick Hill
Given 2023 is the centenary year of the Le Mans 24-Hour race, it's a good time to get your retrospectives done. Technical Illustrator Mick Hill has taken this particular baton, with his Le Mans Winning Colours book published this month. It follows the format of Hill's preceding Formula 1-based work, Grand Prix's Winning Colours, from a couple of years ago. So

the backbone of the book is that for every single Le Mans in those 100 years Hill has a detailed side-on illustration of the winning car, plus a few other details on that year's race (including, pleasingly, the weather). It's not a place to go for a blow-by-blow account for any individual race, nor for in-depth technical explanations; prose indeed is largely limited to a couple of pages introducing each decade (though the 1955 Le

Mans disaster does get a special spread and diagram). But what the book does provide is an attractive and accessible visual guide to how the winning cars particularly, and the race more generally, have evolved over time, as well as is a handy Le Mans historical reference. The £25 hardback is published by The History Press on April 27, and you can pre-order a copy at: thehistorypress.co.uk/



publication/
le-mans-winning-
colours/9781803992013/.
Graham Keilloh

TV GUIDE

On a fairly quiet week for motorsport on television, Eurosport 2 reviews the all-new World Endurance Championship's recent Sebring curtain-raiser on Saturday evening at 2100hrs-2200hrs, and shows it again multiple times on Sunday. Eurosport 1 then supplements it on Monday with highlights of last year's Le Mans,

at 1100hrs-1200hrs and then on Tuesday it has the best of last year's Six Hours of Monza at 1055hrs-1155hrs. There are also chances to watch highlights of last weekend's Australian Supercar quadruple header that supported the Formula 1 at Melbourne's Albert Park. Viaplay Xtra has them on Saturday at 1000hrs-1200hrs, while

BT Sport 1 shows them on Tuesday at 1300hrs-1500hrs. While if you don't stay up late to watch this weekend's NASCAR Cup dirt race action from Bristol, Viaplay Sports 2 shows it all again on Monday morning at 0730hrs-1200hrs. It then has highlights on Tuesday at 1700hrs-1800hrs.
Graham Keilloh



Sebring on Eurosport
LIVE TV
NASCAR
Bristol
Race: Sunday, 2330hrs-0500hrs,
Viaplay Sports 2

LISTINGS

RACING FRIDAY-SATURDAY
■ **Donington Park Nat, Leics**
Masters Festival: GT Trophy, Gentleman Drivers, Pre '66 Touring Cars, Sports Car Legends, Endurance Legends, HGPCA Starts Friday, racing from 1350hrs (qualifying from 0915hrs) Saturday, racing from 1000hrs (qualifying from 0910hrs) Admission adult £22, under 13 free Web msv.com Contact 0344 225 4422

SATURDAY-SUNDAY
■ **Snetterton 300, Norfolk**
BRSCC meeting: TCR UK, Supersport, Fiesta ST240, Fiesta ST150, Fiesta Junior, Modified Ford, CityCar Cup, Civic Cup Starts Saturday, racing from 1310hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 0940hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Admission adult £15, under 13 free Web msv.com Contact 0344 225 4422
■ **Brands Hatch Indy, Kent**
Truck meeting: Trucks, Mini, Caterham Graduates, MGOC, Pickup Truck, Kumho BMW, Hyundai Coupe Starts Saturday, racing from 1210hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1025hrs (qualifying from 1000hrs) Admission adult £25, under 13 free Web msv.com Contact 0344 225 4422

SATURDAY AND MONDAY
■ **Oulton Park Int'l, Cheshire**
British GT meeting: British GT, GB3, GB4, Ginetta Junior, Ginetta GT, Ginetta GT Academy Starts Saturday, racing from 1425hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Monday, racing from 0830hrs Admission adult £25, under 13 free Web msv.com Contact 0344 225 4422

MONDAY
■ **Castle Combe, Wilts**
CCRC meeting: FF1600, GT, Saloons, Hot Hatches, Welsh Sports and Saloons/Intermarque Silhouette, Tin Tops/Super

Saloons Starts racing from 1120hrs (qualifying from 0830hrs) Admission adult £25, under 16 free Web castlecombecircuit.co.uk
■ **Donington Park Nat, Leics**
750MC meeting: Formula Vee, Locost, Toyota MR2, Bikesports, Hot Hatch, CALM All Porsche Starts racing from 1130hrs (qualifying from 0910hrs) Admission adult £15, under 13 free Web msv.com Contact 0344 225 4422

RALLYING SATURDAY
■ **Circuit of Ireland (NI)**
Ulster Automobile Club (spectators admitted) Web uaceasterstages.com

SUNDAY
■ **Lookout Stages, Melbourne**
Trackrod Motor Club (no spectators) Web trackrodmotorclub.co.uk
SPORTING SCENE FRIDAY
■ **Skegness Raceway, Lincolnshire**
National Hot Rods Starts 1800hrs Admission adults £20, concessions £18, Juniors 12-15 £9, kids go free Web Spedeworth.co.uk

SATURDAY AND MONDAY
■ **Lydden Hill, Kent**
5 Nations Rallycross Championship Starts 0900hrs (both days) Admission adults £20 (both days) Web lyddenhill.co.uk

MONDAY
■ **Ipswich, Suffolk**
National Hot Rods Starts 1300hrs Admission TBA Web Spedeworth.co.uk
Details correct at time of going to press, please check with organisers before travelling

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Vic Wright captured an eclectic mixture of car testing at Brands Hatch recently



North Wales action, by Stuart Taunton



Justin Ward captured this bonkers Minor



Peter Atkins enjoyed a recent Sporting Trial



Praga in flight at Silverstone, by Bob Sketchley

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